UPchieve Student Safety Policy

Introduction

Although UPchieve is a virtual platform, we still need to take precautions to keep students safe. This is especially important since the majority of students using the platform are under 18 years old. Students, their parents, their teachers, and our student enrollment partners all rely on us to create a safe and welcoming environment.

Your Responsibilities As a Volunteer

1. Keep communication on the platform

All communication between UPchieve students and Academic Coaches should occur via UPchieve's virtual classroom. Taking communication off the platform is a serious offense and also puts you at risk in the event that the student feels you behaved inappropriately, since we will have no record of that outside communication.

If a student asks you to collaborate with them on another platform, such as talking via Zoom or editing their essay in Google Docs, you should politely refuse and remind them that communication must stay on the platform. While you may look at the material they send you, you should send any suggestions or feedback you have via the UPchieve chat or collaborative tools, like our whiteboard or document editor.

You should never meet a student in real life. If we discover that any student and volunteer have met in person, both parties will be banned from UPchieve and if possible, we will report the interaction to the student's parents, school, or local authorities.

2. Never share or seek personally identifiable information

Personally identifiable information (or PII for short) is information that could be used to identify or track down an individual. Common examples of PII include:

- Full or partial name
- Full or partial physical address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Birthday or date of birth
- School name

During a session on UPchieve, the only personal information students and volunteers are provided with is each other's first names. You are never allowed to request the PII of students on the platform. Additionally, you cannot share your own PII, even if the student asks for it.

Instead, remind the student that in order to continue using UPchieve, communication must stay on the platform.

If a student shares PII with you or tries to ask for your own PII, please let us know in the post-session form so we can follow up with the student and remind them not to do so in the future.

3. Moderate your conversation with students

UPchieve's role is to be a resource for students in achieving their academic goals. As a result, your conversation with students should strike a balance between being friendly and professional. Keep the conversation focused on the student, and refrain from using profanity or language that could be interpreted as offensive or derogatory.

While asking some questions about the student's life may be appropriate or help develop a rapport (especially in college counseling sessions), make sure you keep the conversation appropriate. A good rule of thumb is to think "Would this student's parent/guardian be okay with this comment or question?"

Here are some examples of questions that are/ are not acceptable:

Never Acceptable
You may never ask a student any questions that can be used to discover their identity, where they live, or contact them outside of our platform. These questions include:
- Where do you live?
  - Never ask for a student's address or city. State made be applicable (see below)
- What school do you go to?
- What's your phone number / email / contact information?
- How old are you?
- What's your last name?

Contextually Acceptable
These are questions that may be important to ask in some college counseling sessions, but would very rarely be required for a tutoring session:.
- Do you want to go to college in-state or out of state?
- What state do you live in?
  - Unlike asking the town/city a student lives in, knowing what state a student lives in can give you the context to provide better support (e.g.any regional specific scholarships or schools nearby)
- What grade are you in? (This is useful to know what potential exams a student should be studying for, PSAT/SATs, when to visit colleges, etc.)

Always Acceptable

These are questions that you can ask and that may provide you context on how the session should be steered.

- How's your day going?
- How's the school year going?
- What subjects or activities do you like best / least?
- What kind of homework does your teacher assign?
- How do you work through problems?
- How do you prepare for an exam / study?
- How do you feel about your teacher/classes?

4. Keep Chats Private

In the course of volunteering with UPchieve, you will have many private conversations with students, some of which may be heartwarming or eye opening. However, keep in mind that students speak to their coaches in confidence and often assume that you will not share those conversations with anyone else. Never post screenshots of sessions online.

5. Report Safety Concerns & Behavior In Need of Immediate Attention

Reporting a student is designed to keep UPchieve a safe and positive environment for both coaches and students. In every session you have a "report" button on the top of the chat box. Use this button if students are in need of immediate attention from UPchieve staff.
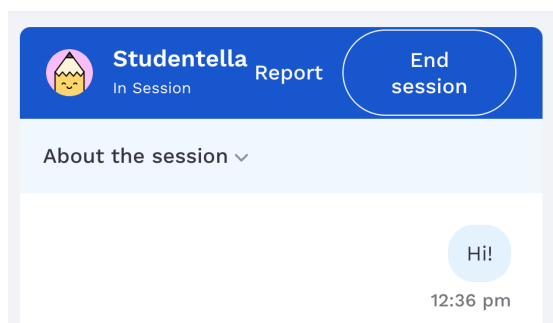
A. Reporting a student who is extremely rude or inappropriate

When you choose this option the student's account will be temporarily suspended while we review the incident. In some cases, your report can result in a permanent ban for the student. You should never feel uncomfortable or disrespected on UPchieve and we encourage you to report bad behavior.

When deciding whether or not to report a student, remember to give them the benefit of the doubt and think about their intent. If you encounter a behavior that could be due to reluctance to learn or a subpar learning environment, **please let us know in the post-session form instead.**

Asking for help is hard, so we want to be sure we only suspend students who are behaving badly and not those who lack motivation.

Examples of situations you should report:
- The student is using inappropriate language
- The student is asking you overly personal questions
- The student is bullying or trolling

Examples of situations to tell us about in the post-session survey instead:
- The student is slow to respond, doesn't respond at all, or abruptly ends the session
- The student is not engaging in the questions you ask or you perceive a lack of effort
- The student is asking you for the answers

B. Reporting a student whose immediate safety you are worried about

UPchieve is only qualified to provide academic support to students—we are not qualified to support a student in a crisis. In rare cases, a student may open up to you about a situation that you deem to be unsafe for the student or those around them. If this happens, you should take these steps:

1. Report the student to UPchieve. We want to be able to respond as quickly as possible when this happens. After reporting, you can continue the session with steps 2 - 5.

2. Validate their experience.
   - You can say: "I hear you, it sounds like you're going through a lot."

3. Explain that you are not the right person in this situation.
   - You can say: "I'm not the right person to help you with what you need. I'm a tutor and UPchieve is only for academic support."

4. Help them make a plan by sharing a qualified place they can turn to.
   - You can say: "It sounds like you need to talk to someone who can help you beyond your academic needs and you should. There are really supportive people that you can reach [choose a resource from below] and they'll know how to help you because this is what they do."
   - Resources to point them to:
     - Mental health crisis: www.crisistextline.org
     - Emotional support (not a crisis): https://need2text.com/
     - Child abuse: https://childhelphotline.org/
     - Homelessness: https://www.1800runaway.org/youth-teens/get-help
     - LGBTQ support: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/
     - Sexual assault: https://hotline.rainn.org/online

■ Unhealthy romantic relationship: https://www.loveisrespect.org/

5. After these steps, you can continue to be present and validate their experience or you can end the session.
   ○ You can say: "I'm glad you're looking for help today and I hope the resources I shared were helpful! Please reach out to the resource I shared and I will be rooting for you."

Consequences

Any violation of the student safety policy could result in your immediate termination as a volunteer with UPchieve. Depending upon the severity of the violation, a volunteer may:

- Receive written warning
- Be temporarily suspended from the platform
- Be fully banned from the platform