

# **SAFEGUARDING YOUNG LEARNERS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY 2012/13**

## **1 Purpose**

This policy sets out the College's approach to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners, volunteers and staff. The policy provides principles to be followed in line with the College's commitment to safeguarding and WSCB Multi Agencies Child Protection Procedures and includes reference to:

- What to do in the event of a disclosure.
- What to do if you witness an event/incident relating to safeguarding.
- Handling of disclosure information.
- Safer recruitment procedures.
- Vetting and barring requirements.
- Staff development and training procedures.

All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with the provisions of this policy and ensure adherence to the intention of the policy and legal obligations. The College may amend this policy from time to time in view of best practice where the result in treatment to learners, staff and volunteers is no less fair or where it is appropriate in the light of specific circumstances. This policy may also be varied if future legislative changes require.

## **2 Scope**

All staff who work under a contract of service are required to adhere to the principles of safeguarding and to complete awareness training. In addition, volunteers, partners and subcontractors are required to adhere to the College's principles and procedures related to safeguarding.

## **3 Policy Statement**

(This policy statement is also available as a separate document.)

- 3.1 The College is fully committed to all aspects of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and recognises that it places the welfare of its learners, staff and volunteers group as its prime consideration.
- 3.2 The College believes that everyone has the right to be respected and protected from all forms of violence, harm, abuse, loss or exploitation whether intentional or unintentional. The policy has universal application across the College and directly or indirectly influences the actions of all learners, employees, volunteers, and sub-contractors.
- 3.3 This policy places a duty on all staff and volunteers to fulfill their responsibilities to safeguard and protect the welfare of young learners and vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- 3.4 The College will work in co-operation with all relevant statutory services and within appropriate national or local inter-agency guidelines in response to any actual, alleged or suspected instances of violence, harm, abuse, loss or exploitation.

3.5 The College is committed to take steps to provide protection to our college community by:

- carrying out its responsibilities under all relevant legislation, regulations and formal guidance for the protection of children and vulnerable adults,
- ensuring that all legislation and compliance activities are adhered to,
- proactively and collaboratively work with appropriate agencies to ensure our education and training demonstrates this commitment,
- committing resources to implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures that are designed to prevent or notify suspected abuse,
- communicating and sharing with all parents/carers of learners under 18 and of vulnerable adults of the existence of the Safeguarding Young Learners and Vulnerable Adults Policy and supporting procedures, and the fact that this may require situations of suspected abuse to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the learner,
- communicating and sharing with children and vulnerable adults the standards of behaviour and conduct they can expect from our staff and volunteers and what to do if they experience or suspect abuse.
- allocating competent resources to investigate and deal with allegations relating to safeguarding in a culture where abuse is understood and recognised so that it can be addressed,
- ensuring that all allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with our procedures,
- reporting any instance, allegations or suspicion of young learner or vulnerable adult abuse and ensuring that all records are kept in accordance with the College's young learner and vulnerable adults protection procedures,
- ensuring that all aspects of data protection, disclosure legislation and data security are adhered to and that our internal paper and electronic data storage systems protect individuals and provide appropriate confidentiality,
- providing specific safeguarding training, guidance and support to all of our staff, and volunteers,
- Adopting vigorous pre-employment checks for all staff and maintaining a cycle of checks for those that either work directly with learners or for those that handle learner data.
- Registering individuals as required by the ISA vetting and barring scheme.
- Implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of safer recruitment techniques and ensuring that all interviews demonstrate and underpin our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

3.6 The College expects all staff and volunteers to demonstrate exemplar safeguarding performance by:

- demonstrating a personal and professional commitment to the College's safeguarding policy and procedures and wider principles of safeguarding.
- reporting all instances, allegations and suspicions related to safeguarding to an internal Safeguarding Designated Officer who will determine the action to be taken.
- fully co-operating with any investigations and to demonstrate confidentiality.

The College prides itself on being vigilant and robust with a 'No Secrets' approach to safeguarding.

MARK ROBERTON  
Principal & Chief Executive (2013)

## **4 Reporting Responsibilities**

All college staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with the policy and guidelines in relation to safeguarding. The safeguarding policy should ensure that all staff are clear about their level of responsibility with regard to safeguarding and it provides procedures to follow in the event of safeguarding concerns or events. (see Safeguarding Procedures 1 & 2) It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure reasonable steps are taken to help minimise the potential of harm and risk to themselves and to our learners.

The College believes that:

- **everyone has the right to be respected and protected from all forms of violence, harm, abuse, loss or exploitation whether intentional or unintentional.**
- **it is never acceptable for a person to be subject to, or exposed to situations where violence, harm, abuse, loss or exploitation could occur.**
- **the values within our equality & diversity policy underpin our commitment to safeguarding.**

## **5 Allegations against customers and service users**

Once a member of staff or volunteer suspects or knows of any abuse of any child or vulnerable adult, s/he should immediately refer to the procedures for disclosures to ensure compliance with our safeguarding policy. (see Safeguarding Procedures 1 & 2) Even if staff/volunteers have only heard rumours of abuse, or have a suspicion but do not have firm evidence, they should still contact the designated safeguarding person to discuss concerns.

## **6 Allegations against staff**

Members of staff/volunteers should contact the Designated Person for their area if they know or suspect that a member of staff or volunteer has a previous history of abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults. (see Safeguarding Procedure 3)

## **7 Reporting and Referrals:**

Any detailed information about a case will be confined to the discloser, the person to whom the disclosure is made and the safeguarding person. Staff reporting the allegations will be kept informed of the progress of the case on a 'need to know' basis and do not have an immediate right to the knowledge of the outcome of a disclosure.

## **8 Guidance for staff receiving disclosures:**

If a child or vulnerable adult comes to you with a report of apparent abuse, you should listen carefully to the child or vulnerable adult, using the following guidelines. When listening to a child or vulnerable adult staff must:

- allow the child or vulnerable adult to speak without interruption.
- never trivialise or exaggerate the issue.
- never make suggestions.
- never coach or lead the child or vulnerable adult in any way.
- reassure the child or vulnerable adult, let them know you are glad they have spoken up and that they are right to do so.
- only ask enough questions to clarify your understanding but do not probe or interrogate – no matter how well you know the child or vulnerable adult – in order to spare them having to repeat themselves over and over.

- be honest – let the child or vulnerable adult know that you cannot keep this a secret and you will need to tell someone else.
- try to remain calm – remember that disclosure is not an easy thing to do.
- not show emotions – if you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your negative feelings are directed towards them.
- let the child or vulnerable adult know that you are taking the matter very seriously.
- make the child or vulnerable adult feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.

The person to whom a disclosure is made, or by whom an incident is witnessed must record the information, ensuring that the discloser is aware of the steps you are taking, as soon as possible. ***It is imperative referrals are made within the shortest time period possible.*** Please refer to the procedure for reporting a disclosure and logging of disclosure information. (see Safeguarding Procedures 1 & 2)

## 9 Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals

The College is committed to safeguarding and as such investigations upheld will be subject to our disciplinary policy. **Any allegation against a College member of staff will result in immediate suspension, on full pay, as per our disciplinary policy, while an investigation whether internal or external is undertaken.**

Should the decision be made to dismiss an employee, this will be confirmed in writing, along with the right to appeal. The appeal should be received within 7 calendar days of receipt of the letter and should state the grounds on which the appeal is being made. If an allegation is upheld against a member of staff the College is legally required to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If the College is made aware that a member of staff is subject to a bar from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) they will face immediate suspension and investigation for gross misconduct.

All instances of criminal activity will be reported to the police in addition to DBS.

Should you have a grievance in relation to this policy, please contact either your line manager who will support as necessary.

## 10 Safer Recruitment

The College is committed to ensuring a “fair and transparent” recruitment process and in line with our policy development procedure has updated the recruitment policy to reflect the requirements and principles of safeguarding. (see Safeguarding Procedure 4)

**The College is committed to ensuring that safer recruitment practices are adhered to across the College and provides:**

- an up to date Recruitment and Selection Policy that describes process and safe recruitment guidance.
- a statement about the college’s commitment to safeguarding which is placed on all job descriptions and recruitment advertising/selection materials.
- guidelines to ensure that each application received is scrutinised in a fair systematic way ensuring that candidates are aware of our safeguarding commitment and the clearance requirements of any role applied for.
- interview and selection procedures that ensure an interview is undertaken with every shortlisted applicant.

A rigorous vetting procedure and the assurance that no new members of staff who move into a role which includes regulated or controlled activities will be allowed to commence employment without a relevant CRB check.

## 11 E Safety/ICT Usage

The College is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their safety from direct or indirect harm. The College's ICT usage policy ensures that College staff are responsible for preventing the loss, misplacement or unauthorised access to confidential information. (see Staff Guide to Working Safely with Learners and use of Electronic Communications)

E Safety - Children and vulnerable adults can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through the medium of Information Technology. It is important that staff and volunteers are alert to potential risks children or vulnerable adults may be exposed to, and that steps have been taken to mitigate the risk of this occurring, with specific reference to:

- *Content* – e.g. exposure to age-inappropriate material, inaccurate or misleading information, socially unacceptable material (e.g. inciting violence, hate or intolerance) and illegal material. The College uses technology to mitigate and prevent this risk on College networks and equipment.
- *Contact* – e.g. grooming, using communication technologies leading to inappropriate behaviour or abuse.
- *Commerce* – e.g. exposure to inappropriate advertising, online gambling, identity theft and financial scams; the College currently uses technology to mitigate and protect our staff and service users.
- *Conduct* – e.g. bullying via websites, mobile phones or other communication technologies, or inappropriate downloading of copyright materials (i.e. music, films, images); exposure to inappropriate advertising, online gambling and financial scams.

Addressing these issues through training, e-learning for staff and volunteers, and awareness raising with learners will be undertaken by the College.

The College actively use advances in technology to ensure ongoing improvements to the College's safeguarding provision with regard to safety and ICT usage.

## 12 Health and Safety

Comprehensive health and safety arrangements ensure the welfare of our learners both on campus, on college trips and in work experience

## 13 Legislative Framework

This policy, and procedures which appendix this policy, have been established in relation to legislation and statutory guidelines to ensure the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults. They include:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Every Child Matters
- Section 115(4) of the Police Act 1997
- The Education Act (2002) Section 175
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (which bans certain types of relationships between staff and clients & volunteers /clients – see below)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF statutory code of practice 2007)
- The Children's Plan (DCSF)
- Ofsted – Common Inspection Framework – Safeguarding and Every Child Matters
- Disclosure and Barring Service <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- There is also guidance for action to be taken outside work by any citizen contained in the document *'What To Do If You Think A Child Is Being Abused'*

There is also protection from bullying and harassment under a range of European and UK laws, including the Treaty of Amsterdam and Equality Act 2006: (Age, Race, Disability, Gender and Gender reassignment, Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation, Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the Gender Directive 2008.