

# STUDENT RELATED POLICY: SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS

This policy is annually reviewed to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
<b>Approved by:</b> Assistant Principal: Student Experience <b>Reviewed by:</b> Head of Safeguarding & Wellbeing	
Date of next review	<b>August 2026</b>

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual orientation, and Disability

# 1. Document Control

## 1.1. Document Details

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## 1.2. Revision History

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1.0	Sept 2021	Dawn Telford / Vicki Locke	Definitive Release
1.1	Feb 2022	Vicki Locke	Removal of Dawn Telford as contact
2.0	Aug 2022	Sharon Posey / Heather Marks	Definitive Release
2.1	Jan 2023	Sharon Posey	Amendments – Safeguarding Officers
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3.1	January 2024	Sharon Posey	Staffing/Job title changes
4.0	August 2024	Sharon Posey	Change of terminology throughout – Learners to Students. Additional bullet points on page 17, 20, 23, 31, 36. MyConcern reporting mentioned on page 27. Appendix 1 updated.
4.1	October 2024	Sharon Posey	Amendment to first bullet point on page 13. Sentence added to Roles and Responsibilities – All staff (page 20), name change on page 24
5.0	September 2025	Sharon Posey / Jen Durrant / Hannah Clare	<p>Amendments to reflect job title and department title changes. Removal of ESFA, addition of the Notification to the DfE section. Change of designated college governor.</p> <p>Amends to bullet points within the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Safety</li> <li>• Filtering &amp; Monitoring</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and Selection Procedures</li> </ul> <p>Amends to paragraphs within the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction</li> <li>Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff</li> <li>Receiving an allegation from a young person</li> <li>Initial assessment of an allegation against staff</li> <li>Enquiries and investigations involving external agencies</li> <li>Recruitment and selection procedures</li> </ul> <p>Additional section within item 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting Safeguarding concerns at Boston College</li> </ul> <p>Running order of items 3 and 4 amended.</p>
5.1	November 2025		Change of Principal

### 1.3. Distribution

Name	Email	Organisation
All Staff	Uploaded to SharePoint and website	Boston College

**This policy is to be used in relation to the following college policies:**

Search, Screen and Confiscation Policy

Self-Harm Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Online Safety Policy

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Code of Professional Conduct

Student Code of Conduct

Student Disciplinary Policy

Compliments, Complaints and Concerns Policy

Data Protection

Substance misuse

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Health and Safety and related policies, including Educational Visits

Recruitment and Selection

Computer Use and Digital Code of Conduct

Prevent Duty Statement

Admissions

Death of a Student

External Speakers

## **PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK FROM ABUSE**

### **Contents**

1. Introduction and General Policy Statement and Definitions
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Dealing with Safeguarding concerns and procedure for reporting
4. Dealing with welfare concerns and procedures for reporting
5. Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
6. Recruitment and selection procedures
7. Staff training and development

## 1. **INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT AND DEFINITIONS**

Boston College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and expects all staff, Governors, volunteers and partners working in college to share this commitment.

Procedures have been developed to ensure that the College complies with statutory duties under The Children and Families Act 2014 and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

There is a designated manager with lead responsibility for Safeguarding.

The governing body will receive an annual report from the designated manager which reviews how the duties have been discharged. The governing body will nominate a governor to take special responsibility for Safeguarding issues.

The Principal, designated governor and designated manager and all staff working at Boston College will receive training to familiarise them with Safeguarding issues and responsibilities and the College policy and procedures, with refresher training, delivered online and/or face to face every three years, and annual refreshers via e-mail and newsletters.

### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of the College's Safeguarding Students policy and procedures the governing body recognises the following definitions: -

#### **Staff**

All College employees whether academic, administrative, management or support as well as substantial volunteers.

#### **Child / Young person**

For the purposes of safeguarding, a child is anyone under the age of 18.

In addition, any young person under 24 with and Education Health Care Plan is legally defined as a child.

#### **Adult at risk**

An adult at risk can be defined as someone who requires additional support to carry out everyday tasks due to physical disability or learning difficulties / disabilities, where their support needs render them open to exploitation.

### **Victim**

This is a widely used and recognised term. It is important to acknowledge that not everyone who has been subject to abuse sees themselves as a victim. The College should be conscious of this and use any term the individual is comfortable with.

### **Perpetrator/Alleged Perpetrator**

These are widely used and recognised terms. However, the College recognises that using this term in front of young people could be inappropriate as in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. The College will use terminology that the individual is comfortable with.

### **Abuse**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children (Keeping Children Safe in Education). This could be one or more of the following categories of abuse.

#### **a) Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Signs/indicators of neglect:

- Substance misuse during pregnancy
- Lack of adequate food, being hungry and not having money for food
- Having unwashed or torn clothing, or no warm clothing e.g. coats in winter
- Inadequate/unsafe shelter
- Abandonment
- Failure to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger from other
- Being unresponsive to the child's basic emotional needs
- Medical or dental issues due to lack of check-ups/appointments

- Poor social skills
- Physical issues such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies
- Untreated injuries

#### **b) *Physical Injury***

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs/indicators of physical abuse:

- Unexplained broken bones
- Unexplained bruising/cuts/welts/abrasions
- Unexplained burns
- Bite marks
- Scarring
- Illness from poisoning e.g., vomiting, drowsiness, seizures
- Being extremely withdrawn or aggressive
- Mental health issues including self-harm or suicidal thoughts.
- Absence from college with varying reasons and length of time
- May dress inappropriately to weather conditions or avoid changing in front of others to cover any injuries.
- Reluctance to go home

#### **c) *Sexual Abuse***

This type of abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.



Signs/indicators of sexual abuse:

- Bruising
- Bleeding, discharge, pain or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of a person they know.
- Overly sexualised behaviour/promiscuity
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Develop mental health issues, including anxiety, depression and self-harm
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating issue.
- Changes in mood, feeling irritable/angry.

#### **d) *Emotional / psychological abuse***

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs/indicators of emotional/psychological abuse:

- Struggle to control or verbalise their emotions.
- Have extreme outbursts/anger issues.
- Seem isolated from their parents and family.
- Lack social skills.
- Have few or no friends.
- Develop mental health issues including anxiety, depression and self-harm.

### **Additional forms of Abuse**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues – some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education, sexting and serious violence including County Lines and radicalisation put children in danger.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

### **County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and adults at risk are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Some specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

### **Serious Crime/Violence**

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

### **Child on Child Abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online.

All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to the safeguarding team. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

### **Cyber Crime**

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a college's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

### **Online Safety**

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The College has an effective policy to online safety to protect and educate students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and nonconsensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Filters and monitoring systems are in place on all college IT systems to provide students with a safe environment in which to learn and to limit students exposure to risk of harm and/or abuse to inappropriate material.

The filtering and monitoring systems are also informed by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The college needs to meet this duty and the standards set out by the Department for Education to:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems as identified in the roles section
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually. This is done by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Director of ICT.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs. This is done via the College's Online safety policy, and utilising Smoothwall and FastVue.

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and ever developing variety of devices place an additional risk to young people. Social media and networks can be used as a means to contact children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern for all staff. It is essential that young people are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

Students can engage or be a target of cyberbullying using a wide range of methods to reach their targets. Boston College uses its tutorial and curriculum to raise awareness of safeguarding issues so that students can identify the risks of being drawn into

abusive or exploitive relationships. Boston College also uses The National College to provide information, guidance and training to staff, young people, parents and carers.

If staff observe or are notified of any concerns online, they must: -

- Report to Student Services or Safeguarding Team via MyConcern
- Student Service and/or Safeguarding will ascertain whether this is to be dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy and/or the Bullying and Harassment Policy
- If an illegal act has been disclosed/observed, then the Police must be informed.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Operation Encompass is a national scheme that ensures education providers have timely information of any domestic abuse incidents where police have attended and there is a child in the home. Upon receipt of a referral from Operation Encompass, the safeguarding team will act on the information and offer appropriate support to the young person.

The college will work with all agencies to support and identify victims of domestic abuse.

### **Hidden Harm**

The effects on the young person because of a parent or carers misuse of substances such as drugs or alcohol. The impact of witnessing and living with alcohol or drug users has a long-term effect on a young person's emotional and psychological development.

### **Self-Harm**

'The definition of self-harm is intentional self-poisoning or self-injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act. Self-harm includes cutting, poisoning, asphyxiation, burning and other self-inflicted injuries' (NICE 2004). Self-harm can also include eating disorders, risk-taking behaviour and drug and alcohol issues.

Self-harm is often a coping mechanism. An individual harms their physical self to deal with emotional pain or to break feelings of numbness. Self-harm can become a natural response to the stresses of day-to-day life and can escalate in frequency and severity.

All instances of self-harm should be referred to the Safeguarding Team. There are various external agencies who can support a young person.

### **So-called Honour Based Violence**

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see below).

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an unacceptable form of abuse and violence against girls and women; it is known as female circumcision and is illegal in the UK.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

The safeguarding team also need to be notified immediately of any suspected cases or females at risk of FGM.

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and



free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

### **Radicalisation / Extremism**

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology, there are possible indicators that should be taken into consideration alongside other factors and contexts. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). However, it is possible to protect people from extremist ideologies and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism.

As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

College staff should be aware of signs of radicalisation and report their concerns to the Safeguarding Team.

### **Signs of radicalisation:**

- expressing an obsessive or angry sense of injustice about a situation, and blaming this on others
- expressing anger or extreme views towards a particular group – such as a different race or religion
- suggesting or believing that violent action is the only way to solve an issue.



- sharing extreme views or hatred on social media or via any other communications e.g. leaflets.

The College will also promote the ethos of the 'Prevent' agenda by encouraging free and open debate but challenging extreme views. It will encourage through its classroom practice, tutorial programme and induction activities a belief in Equal Opportunities and the celebration of Diversity.

The College will not host or allow its premises to be used by extreme groups and will seek to prevent the distribution of extreme literature.

The College will provide appropriate support through its own staff or by referral to external agencies, for any student in danger of radicalisation.

The College recognises that radicalisation may be geographical and will follow Prevent guidance to report any concerns to the relevant local authority/police force.

### **Children who are absent from education**

All staff should be aware that children being absent from college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

This may include abuse and neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of the college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Where students under the age of 18 display erratic, long-term or regular absences, the College will ensure that staff follow-up with parents/carers or external agencies to establish that they are safe. If no contact can be made with the student or their parent/carer and their whereabouts cannot be confirmed by other staff, staff must report the concern to the Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team will then need to assess whether this meets the criteria for contacting the Local Authority Education Team, Police and/or Children's Social Care.

### **Definition of Missing**

Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

A child can be missing from education, home and care, and should be treated as a safeguarding concern by college staff.

### **Definition of Absent**

A person not a place where they are expected or required to be.

The 'absent' category should comprise of cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk. 'Absent' cases should not be ignored; they must be monitored over periods time with consideration given to escalating to 'missing' if there is a change to the circumstances that have increased the level of risk.

### **Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Statutory guidance as set out in KCSIE is about how schools and colleges should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online. As set out in Part one of KCSIE, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
- challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment wherever it happens, may find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood,

adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

LGBTQ+ are also more at risk of sexual violence and harassment.

Ultimately, it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The college takes sexual violence and harassment seriously and will take immediate action on reports/issues.

All college staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours, including verbal comments that purport to sexual harassment.

If a student discloses that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or violated, staff should report the incident on MyConcern and refer to the Safeguarding Team. It may be necessary for the Safeguarding Team to contact Children's Services and/or the Police. The College is actively raising awareness of sexual harassment through delivery of "Call It Out" sessions to governors, staff and students.

### **Up skirting**

Up skirting is when someone takes a picture under someone's clothing without permission. This could be with the intent to view genitals or buttocks with or without underwear.

Anyone of any gender can be a victim, and the college does not tolerate this behaviour. It is a specific criminal offence, and perpetrators will be reported to the police.

The college also recognises that down blousing (taking a picture underneath shirts/upper body clothing without permission) is invasive and harmful to victims. While there is no specific criminal legislation for this currently, any incidents of down blousing will be treated in line with college disciplinary policies.

Any incidents of up skirting/down blousing should be reported to the safeguarding team.

### **Mental Health**

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Colleges can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support; this includes working with external agencies.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their safeguarding policy, and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

### **Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

All staff should be aware that students can be victim to Modern Slavery and report these concerns to the college's safeguarding team.

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible before they are facing a homelessness crisis. In

most cases college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis.

However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, or by choice and will require a different level of intervention and support.

Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children, and the designated safeguarding lead should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **All Staff**

All staff members, Governors, volunteers and external providers understand their responsibility to safeguard and protect children and Adults at Risk, know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, how to respond to students and apprentices who disclose, and what to do if they are concerned about a child or Adults at Risk. This applies to safeguarding and protecting students on educational visits, including international visits.

College staff are particularly important, as they can identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- Support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- Follow the processes set out in this policy under section 4 (Dealing with safeguarding concerns and procedures for reporting) if there are concerns about a child's welfare.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

What all staff need to know:

All staff should be aware of systems within the college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- Safeguarding policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
- Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Student code of conduct policy
- Staff code of conduct policy, should amongst other things, include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing.
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

### **The Board of Governors**

The College's Board of Governors have strategic leadership responsibility for the College's Safeguarding arrangements and must ensure they comply with their duties under KCSIE legislation. They are responsible in ensuring Safeguarding policies and procedures and training are effective and comply with law at all times.

The designated member of the governing body with responsibility for Safeguarding issues is: -

*David Fannin who can be contacted through the Clerk to the Corporation via the Management Office, Rochford Campus*

The designated governor is responsible for liaising with the Principal and designated manager over matters regarding safeguarding, including: -

- ensuring that the College has procedures and policies which are consistent with procedures set out by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);
- ensuring that the governing body considers the College policy on safeguarding the welfare of students each year.
- ensuring that each year the governing body is informed of how the College and its staff have complied with the policy, including, but not limited to, a report on the training that staff have undertaken.

The designated governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between Children's Social Care and the Police in connection with any allegations against the Principal or the Designated Manager. This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation

but will ensure good communication between parties and provide information to assist enquiries.

To assist in these duties the designated governor shall receive appropriate training in Safeguarding issues.

Governors will receive appropriate safeguarding training at the point of induction.

### **Principal and CEO**

The Principal and CEO at the college is;

*Lynette Leith*

The principal and CEO has a strategic leadership responsibility for the college's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation.

They must have regard to this guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The Principal should ensure that the policies and procedures, adopted by their governing bodies (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect), are understood, and followed by all staff.

### **Manager with Lead Responsibility (Designated Safeguarding Lead)**

The designated manager with lead responsibility for Safeguarding issues is: -

Abid Hussain, Assistant Principal: Student Experience ext. 3301

The College should ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from the college leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post.

The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively.

Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy



discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for: -

- overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to Safeguarding.
- maintaining a proper record of Safeguarding referrals and concerns.
- ensuring that parents/carers and young people within the College are aware of the College's Safeguarding Policy.
- liaising with Children's Social Care, Police and other relevant agencies in relation to Safeguarding issues.
- liaising with secondary schools which send pupils to the College to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.
- liaising with employers and training organisations that receive young people from the College on long term placements to ensure appropriate safeguards are put in place.
- Support and have oversight of DBS procedures where students are required to undertake a full DBS as required for work placement/experience e.g., Health & Social Care, Early Years, Law Enforcement.
- ensuring that staff receive training in Safeguarding and are aware of the College Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- updating College policy and procedure to accommodate changes within legislation, advice and guidance.

The designated manager will provide an annual report to Governors setting out how the College has discharged its duties.

### **Designated Staff Members with safeguarding duties**

Members of staff on the college Safeguarding Team are: -

*Sharon Posey, Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing (Deputy DSL)*

*Amy Creasey, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer*

*Joe Smith, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer*



*Carlo Faratro, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer*

These designated staff members: -

- report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their role as safeguarding officers
- will know how to make an appropriate referral.
- will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child / student protection.
- have particular responsibility to be available to listen to young people / adults at risk studying at the College.
- have received training in Safeguarding and interagency working, as required by the LSCB, and will receive refresher training at least every 3 years.
- attend safeguarding meetings and assist the designated safeguarding lead in producing reports.
- Attend termly external reflective supervision as arranged by the college.

### **Executive Director for People**

The Executive Director for People has a responsibility to ensure that the college has a single central record and managing staff allegations in line with current safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures.

Particularly in cases where a safeguarding concern has been raised against a member of staff, The People Services Team should support the investigation and offer advice and guidance to investigating managers. Advice will also be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The People Services Team have a responsibility to record all low-level concerns against staff in a centralised location.

### **Quality Assurance**

The Assistant Principal for Quality, Performance and Standards will work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to create a cycle of quality checks to measure effectiveness of safeguarding across the college. The Quality team will hold focus groups, surveys and classroom observations to ensure that safeguarding is embedded in the tutorial programme.

The Quality Team will work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to review and share relevant and current safeguarding resources to be delivered to students throughout the academic year via tutorial sessions, to raise awareness of different types of safeguarding issues and raising awareness of support available.

The Safeguarding Team will discuss cases at monthly meetings; to include reflection of feedback from student views, current cases and record lessons learned and what action has been taken to improve practice/processes.

### **Filtering and Monitoring**

The Director of ICT will work alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead to implement, monitor and review Smoothwall and Fastvue filtering and monitoring software packages used by the college.

The Director of ICT will ensure that the college's IT systems, filtering and monitoring and practice consider the main categories of risk for online safety:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and nonconsensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will include filtering and monitoring in Safeguarding refresher training for staff.

Filtering and Monitoring data will be provided by the DSL/DDSL to governors and Executive team to monitor effectiveness and any themes or trends.

### **3. DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023)

Staff should adopt the attitude that 'it could happen here' and any concerns about Safeguarding must be reported without delay to the Safeguarding Team. Staff are required to 'always act in the best interests of the young person and it is unacceptable to ignore/fail to report a concern or disclosure.

**All staff** should be aware that young people/Adults at Risk may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused/neglected, exploited and/or may not recognise their experiences as being harmful. For example, they may feel humiliated, embarrassed or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent professional curiosity and staff should speak to the Safeguarding team if they have any concerns

The steps listed below are intended as a reference for staff responding to a disclosure of abuse: -

- Recognise that the young person may not be ready or able to disclose abuse.
- All concerns and disclosures of abuse should be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity.
- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Remember and respect the fact that it takes great courage to confide such personal and painful concerns and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Don't make promises of absolute confidentiality – disclosures may have to be reported to internal and/or external agencies as appropriate.
- You may wish at this point to suggest that the student speak directly to a member of the Safeguarding Team. If so, make immediate arrangements for them to do this. Otherwise, let the person explain things in their own words and in their own time in an appropriate place.

- Only ask questions to clarify rather than probe, do not put words into the student's mouth, or ask leading questions.
- Explain, if appropriate, that you will need to report these concerns to the Safeguarding Team – they may wish to be present when you do.
- **DO NOT** contact parents / carers, as they may be involved. The Safeguarding Team or Children's Social Care will do this where it is needed.

### **Reporting Safeguarding concerns at Boston College**

- Staff must report any Safeguarding concerns via MyConcern on the Staff Homepage as soon as they become aware of them.
- Students and parents/carers can report safeguarding concerns directly to the Safeguarding team by emailing [safeguarding@boston.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@boston.ac.uk)
- Students can report anonymously via a Microsoft Form on CANVAS under "report a safeguarding issue" tab. The Safeguarding Team will be limited to the level of intervention and guidance provided if we do not have a name of those reporting or involved in the concern. Allegations against staff via the anonymous reporting will be treated as confidential and reviewed as far as possible with limited information to fact find.
- Refer the information to the Safeguarding Team immediately, via MyConcern on the Staff Homepage.

### **Safeguarding Team response to disclosures:**

- The Safeguarding Team will, on receiving information relating to a disclosure of abuse, take the appropriate action – depending on the age of the person concerned and the circumstances.
- The safeguarding team will speak to the student and any other relevant staff or students to ascertain further information and facts.
- All safeguarding cases will be managed and tracked on MyConcern and kept up to date by the allocated safeguarding officer.
- Where a referral to Children's Social Care is required, this will usually be done by the Safeguarding Team within 24 hours.
- Where a referral to Children's Social Care is made, the designated Manager will co-ordinate any requests for information from college staff.
- Where a young person is to be interviewed by Children's Social Care and/or Police, they may choose for the initial interview to take place in the College.

- Where a young person who is under 18 is to be interviewed by Police, an appropriate adult must be present.
- Under these circumstances they may request that either a member of staff of their choice, or one of the Safeguarding Team is present.
- Where a referral to Children's Social Care is not made the young person concerned should be offered support through the College and signposted to external support where required.
- An Early Help Assessment should be considered if appropriate.
- Any allegations involving staff will follow HR procedures as set out in Section 5.

**Reasonable Adjustments for adults at risk and those with a language barrier:**

- The College has a duty of care towards students over 18 with learning difficulties and or physical or mental impairments. The decision to report abuse should not be made by a single person based on the information received by the student.
- If abuse is suspected or reported to a member of staff, they should discuss the matter with a member of the Safeguarding team before contact with external agencies. The course of action will be a matter of professional judgement, and within scope of the safeguarding procedures.
- The member of staff to whom the abuse is revealed should explain the above to the student so that the student is aware that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.
- The College will, where required, use qualified translation and interpreters to speak to students who do not speak or understand English, to ensure that safeguarding measures and support are put in place and that they understand what they are.

**Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Model of Need: -**

The college works to the local authority's thresholds for assessing levels of need and interventions when assessing welfare and safeguarding concerns.

- Universal -The services identified as universal are services such as schools, children centres, education, health provision i.e. G P, hospitals - available to everyone as they are required. The provision of universal services will invariably be provided by a single agency working in isolation. It is Universal Services who are best placed to ensure children and families have access to the Early Help Offer the needs of the child/young person are appropriately met within this framework.
- Early Help - This refers to children, young people and families who have been assessed as having unmet needs which cannot be provided purely by universal provision.

Services identified to support with specific unmet needs can include Young Carers, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Family Support and Child Health Services (CAMHS). These needs may be met by an additional piece of support by one agency or a number working together to address the identified needs of the whole family.

LSCP expect that agencies assess unmet need via the use of an Early Help Assessment. It must be remembered that the universal provision is part of the plan. When a multi-agency response is required the TAC/ESCO process needs to be initiated.

- Child In Need (CIN, section 17) - Some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of children and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote specialist safeguarding services.
- Immediate Safeguarding - There are children where there is a need for immediate safeguarding as they may have suffered or be at risk of suffering significant harm. These children require an immediate referral to Children's Social Care and or Lincolnshire Police for an assessment to be completed to better understand their needs. These children are:
  - Children at immediate risk of significant harm including physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect
  - Children with unexplained injuries, suspicious injuries or where there is inconsistent explanation of the injury
  - Children from families experiencing a crisis likely to result in an imminent break down of care arrangements
  - Where there are serious concerns regarding the risk of significant harm to an unborn baby
  - Children who are remanded
  - Children who are engaged in criminal activity (Refer to YOT)
  - Children who disclose abuse
  - Vulnerable children who are left alone

### **Availability of the Safeguarding Team**

#### **Term Time**

**8.30am – 5.00pm Mon – Fri**

For out of hours Safeguarding concerns please refer to What to do out of college hours (Appendix 1)

Outside of these hours please see external agencies to contact for advice and support:-

- Children's Social Care – 01522 782111
- Adult Social Care – 01522 782155
- Children's and Adult Social Care out of hours – 01522 782333
- Police – 101 or 999 if an emergency
- Anti-terrorist Hotline – 0800 789321

#### **Notification to the DfE as per clauses in contract:**

- A) The College will ensure it notifies the Department via the Customer Help Portal [Home - Customer Help Portal](#) where a referral has been made by the College or one of the College Related Parties in either of the following circumstances (such notification must include the name of the institution, a high level summary of the nature of the incident (without sharing personal information about victims or alleged perpetrators) and confirmation of whether it is, or is scheduled to be, investigated by the Local Authority and/or the police):
  - I. A safeguarding concern related to sexual violence to Local Authority Children's social care/adult social care and/or the police, or
  - II. an allegation of abuse made against a teacher, lecturer or other member of staff to the designated officer(s) (at the local authority).
- B) The College will ensure it notifies the Department via the Customer Help Portal: Home - Customer Help Portal of incident(s) and/or where a referral has been made, where the College or one of the College Related Parties:
  - I. is aware of an incident, or pattern of incidents, which undermines the promotion of British fundamental values as referred to in Clause 15.3 or the ability of the College or the College Related Parties to comply with the Prevent duty, or
  - II. makes a referral of an individual member of College Personnel for the purposes of determining whether that member of College Personnel should be referred to a panel for the carrying out of an assessment under section 36 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 of the extent to which that individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

### **Record Keeping and Monitoring**

- Full records should be kept confidential by the designated Manager responsible for Safeguarding and information shared on a need-to-know basis only. Paper and digital records will be stored in a secure lockable cabinet and on MyConcern only accessed by the Safeguarding Team. These records will be held until the student is 25 years of age. When the retention period ends, paper safeguarding records for students will be destroyed confidentially by an external contractor. Digital records will be deleted from MyConcern software by the Safeguarding Team/administrator.
- All safeguarding files, both paper and electronic, should be passed on to any new education provider where known and appropriate, within 5 days of the start date.

## **4. DEALING WITH WELFARE CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING**

Where there is a welfare concern: -

- staff must report to Student Services by e-mailing [support@boston.ac.uk](mailto:support@boston.ac.uk)
- Student Services staff will ascertain the level of intervention needed.
- if there are Safeguarding concerns, Student Services staff will notify the Safeguarding Team who will implement the full policy.
- if a student requires support from external agencies, then an Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be completed and submitted to the Team Around the Child (TAC) Admin Team.
- If the EHA is accepted, then the Team Around the Child (TAC) process will commence and staff will be expected to assist with the process with assistance from the Student Services Team.
- Other external agencies will be explored to support the student.

## **5. REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF**

Due to their frequent contact with young people, it is possible that staff may have allegations of abuse made against them. The College recognises that such an allegation may be made for a variety of reasons, and the facts of the allegation may be true or untrue.

The College recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.



The College also recognises that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career.

It is therefore imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

All allegations against staff must be reported to the DSL or the DDSL, or in their absence the Executive Director for People or the Head of People Services. Any allegations against staff must not be discussed with anyone else under any circumstances. The Principal will be notified of all allegations.

### **Low Level Concerns**

The college will respond to any concerns about a member of staff and recognise that low-level concerns do not mean that the concern is insignificant. This could be a feeling of unease or a doubt that staff are behaving professionally at all times and conducting themselves appropriately with students.

If a staff member has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the College's staff Code of Professional Conduct policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (see section 6 below).

The college would respond to any reported misconduct or concerns raised by other staff, students or any third party.

Examples of such behaviour include but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children, young people and adults at risk
- having favourites
- contacting children on social media platforms
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- humiliating children.

Low-level concerns about staff should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or DDSL as soon as the behaviour is observed or heard.

The DSL or DDSL will consider the information received, and work alongside the staff member's line manager and People Services to obtain facts from those involved as appropriate. The DSL and DDSL will notify the Principal and the Executive Director for People of all low-level concerns reported.

All fact finding and initial response from the staff member and any witnesses involved will be recorded and kept on their file in People Services.

Low level concerns about staff will be logged in a single central confidential document held in People Services

Any actions taken to address the low-level concern will be recorded and kept on their file in People Services.

If necessary, the College will implement internal disciplinary procedures, including informal action.

### **Response to receiving an allegation from a young person**

The member of staff who receives an allegation from a young person, about another member of staff should follow the guidelines in Section 5 and report the allegation directly to the DSL/DDSL. They must not discuss this with anyone else.

The allegation must be reported immediately to the Principal and Executive Director for People by the DSL/DDSL. In the event that either of these are the subject of allegations the report should be made to the designated Governor.

The DSL or DDSL or a member of the safeguarding team should:

- obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, which must be signed and dated.
- record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.
- Obtain information from the young person making the allegation.

In the event that the Principal is the subject of the concern raised, the DSL/DDSL or Executive for People will report to the Safeguarding Governor.

The Governor will work with relevant Executive/senior staff to manage the investigation.

### **Initial Assessment of an allegation against staff:**

The Principal and Executive Director for People should make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/DDSL, Head of People Services and Children's Services/Police as appropriate.

If it is deemed that the allegation warrants further investigation, an Investigating Officer will be appointed by a Commissioning Manager.

Processes and Procedures of making a LADO referral:

It may be necessary to refer the incident to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the allegation indicates that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved toward a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

After an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the DSL and/or the DDSL, EDP and/or Head of People Services and Principal & CEO will review the initial allegation and any supporting evidence or witness statements available on the day the allegation is received, wherever possible. They will use the LADO referral assessment template to determine whether to seek advice from the LADO.

If required, the DSL/DDSL will seek advice from the LADO by telephone to discuss the allegation and whether it meets threshold for a formal LADO referral. This will be followed up by e-mail to the LADO to confirm the outcome of the telephone discussion and advice given.

The outcome of this discussion will be recorded on the LADO assessment template form, including any actions to be taken by any parties. This assessment form will be held centrally in People Services and added to the staff member's file.

If LADO advise a formal referral is necessary, the DSL or DDSL will complete an online referral to the LADO within 24 hours of the discussion, where practicable, excluding weekends and bank holidays.

The DSL or DDSL must notify the Head of People Services and Senior People Services Manager of the referral by e-mailing a copy of the referral attachment as soon as it's received from LADO.

The DSL or DDSL must update the Staff Concerns spreadsheet on HR SharePoint with relevant information, including date of incident, reporting and LADO referral date.

HOPS or SPSM will advise the member of staff that a LADO referral has been made (unless otherwise advise by the LADO/Police/Children's Services) within 5 working days. Appropriate communications will be considered on a case-by-case basis as to how the staff member is informed, this is usually by letter.

The People Services Team will keep LADO informed of the progression of any internal investigations and where appropriate, the outcome of any disciplinary hearings.

The People Services Team will notify the staff member of the outcome as advised by LADO within 15 working days in writing.

Other potential outcomes are: -

- The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff but is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the young person, the matter should be logged on a low-level concern document.
- The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true.
- A discussion with Local Authority Designated Officer will result in either: -
  1. Investigation by Local Authority / Police.
  2. Investigation by the organisation following existing policies, however keeping the Local Authority informed.

Local Authority Designated Officer 01522 55467

All formal referrals made to LADO will remain on the staff member's LADO record for 6 years regardless of the outcome.

### **Enquiries and Investigations involving external agencies:**

The College will seek advice from relevant external agencies, including LADO, police and Children's services. The College may hold in abeyance its internal enquiries while the formal Police or Children's Social Services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation.

Whilst the Police and Children's Social Care have no power to direct the College to act in a particular way, the College should assist the agencies with their enquiries.

Child protection enquiries by the Police and Children's Social Care should not be confused with the College's internal disciplinary enquiries. The College may use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures, and decision making.

Where there is an investigation by an external agency the relevant staff should normally be involved in inter-agency discussions and ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The appropriate manager or investigating officer will advise the member of staff that they should consult with a representative, for example, a trade union.

Subject to objections from the Police or Children's Services, the for the Designated Safeguarding Lead/DDSL) will: -

- Inform the young person making the allegation, and their parents/carers where appropriate, that an investigation is taking place and what the process will involve.

- The People Services Team will advise the appropriate Line Manager or Investigating Officer to inform the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made that the investigation is taking place and what the process will involve; offer support where appropriate via People Services, Occupational Health or Counselling to support staff wellbeing.

### **Suspension of Staff**

Suspension should not be automatic. In respect of staff other than the Principal, suspension can be carried out by the Principal or a senior manager with delegated authority to do so. In respect of the Principal, suspension can only be carried out by the Chair of Governors (or in their absence the Vice Chair).

Suspension may be considered at any stage of an investigation. It is a neutral not a disciplinary act and will be on full pay. Consideration should be given to alternatives, e.g., paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work; change of or withdrawal from, specified duties.

Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example: -

1. Where a child is at risk or has been harmed.
2. Behaved in a way that they pose a risk of harm to young people.
3. Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
4. Where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.
5. Where it is necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.

If suspension is being considered, the member of staff should be encouraged to seek advice, for example from a trade union.

Prior to making the decision to suspend, the Principal or nominated manager (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) and the Head of People Services/ Senior People Services Manager should advise the member of staff that: -

- an allegation has been made and that they are to be suspended from duty on full pay.
- it is not a formal disciplinary act but an opportunity to fact-find and conclude the investigation as quickly and fairly as possible.
- confirmation of the suspension, and reasons for it, will be sent in writing within three working days of the meeting.

Where a member of staff is suspended, the Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) should address the following issues: -

- The Chair of Governors should be informed of the suspension in writing.
- The governing body should receive a report that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation; the detail given to the governing body should be minimal.
- Where the Principal has been suspended, the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors will need to take action to address the management of the College.
- The person or parent of the young person making the allegation should be informed of the suspension. They should be asked to treat the information as confidential.
- Senior staff who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed.

Depending on the nature of the allegation, the Principal should consider with the nominated Governor whether a statement to the students of the College and/or parents/carers should be made, taking due regard to the need to avoid unwelcome publicity and reputational damage.

### **The Disciplinary Investigation**

The disciplinary investigation should be conducted in accordance with existing disciplinary proceedings.

Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension should be lifted immediately, and arrangements made for their return to work. It may be appropriate to offer counselling or other appropriate support internally.

The person or parent/carer of young person making the allegation should be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings. This should occur prior to the return to college of the member of staff (if suspended).

The Principal (or nominated manager) should give consideration to what information should be available to the general population of the College.

Consideration needs to be taken of statutory guidance when setting timescales.

### **Allegations without foundation**

False allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept, and consideration given to a referral to Children's Services, or other internal and external agencies.

In consultation with the designated manager with lead responsibility and or the designated Governor, the Principal shall: -

- inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken;
- inform the person or parents/carers of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome; and consider any sanctions and/or if it is found that the allegation was of malicious intent.
- prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

### **Records**

It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.

These should be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or 10 years if that will be longer.

### **Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service**

There is a legal requirement for schools and colleges to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults at risk, and/or
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or adults at risk, and/or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

If the allegation is substantiated and on conclusion of the case the employer dismisses the person or ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide their services, the Executive Director for People or Head of People Services should consult the local authority designated officer (LADO) about whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or to a professional or regulatory body is required. If a referral is appropriate the report must be made. A referral must always be made if the employer thinks that the individual has harmed a child or poses a risk of harm to children.

### **Monitoring Effectiveness**

Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the nominated Investigating Officer, together with the DSL/DDSL and Head of People Services should, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether



there are any matters arising from it that should lead to the improvement of the College's Safeguarding Students Policy and Procedures.

Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

The DSL, supported by the People Services Team will provide the Governing Body with an oversight of staff investigations and outcomes relating to safeguarding via Corporation meetings.

## **6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

All staff, including volunteers, shall be recruited in line with existing Recruitment and Selection procedures which includes: -

- verifying a candidate's identity.
- obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate including child barred list information, for those who will be engaged in regulated activity. An adult barred list may also be obtained where personal care may be required as part of the duties of the postholder.
- obtaining a separate child barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
- verifying the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- verifying the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals.
- verifying professional qualifications, as appropriate..
- obtaining satisfactory professional and character references.
- verifying previous employment history.
- taking reasonable steps to establish whether that person is subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.
- ensuring that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for prohibition checks or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE, before its abolition in March 2012
- making a section 128 direction check made by the Secretary of State if appropriate.



- making any further checks the college considers appropriate, if the person has lived or worked outside the UK.
- Carrying out online searches for shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence.
- Maintaining a Single Central record of all staff employed at the college.
- At least one member of the interview panel will be trained in Safer Recruitment. The Recruitment Policy includes further guidance on safer recruitment practices.

## **7. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- All new college employees must undertake the following online training courses prior to commencement of post.
  - Safeguarding
  - Prevent
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
  - GDPR
  - Online Safety
- All new College employees will be made aware of the College's Safeguarding Students Policy and Procedures during the induction process.
- The Safeguarding Students Policy will be available to all current staff via the College Intranet.
- All new starters will have access to online training for Safeguarding and Prevent Training as part of their induction. Safeguarding updates will be provided annually via email, bulletins and team meetings. All staff are required to complete Safeguarding and Prevent refresher training every 3 years.
- The designated manager and other designated members of staff and the designated Governor will receive adequate training to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.
- All staff involved in any safeguarding case should be offered support / counselling / supervision as appropriate.

Reviewed in the light of guidance from DfE and AoC.

## APPENDIX 1

boston:college

# SAFEGUARDING

## What To Do Out Of College Hours

### URGENT/ EMERGENCY

**Medical Help** - Call 111 or 999 in an emergency, or go to A&E

**Police** - Call 101 or 999 in an emergency

**Lincs Social Care** - 01522 782333 Out Of Office Hours (all ages)

**Lincs Children's Social Care** - 01522 782111 8am-6pm, Mon to Fri

**Lincs Adult Social Care** - 01522 78215 8am-6pm, Mon to Fri

**Emergency in an EU country** - 112

**Anti-terrorism** - 0800 789321 or 999 in an emergency

### Under 25

**Young Minds** - Text 'YM' to 85258  
Open 24/7 [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
(Mental health support)

**Childline** - 0800 1111 open 24/7  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**The Mix** - Call 0808 808 4994 3pm to 12am everyday or text 'THEMIX' to 85258 open 24/7 [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)  
(Mental health support)

**Kooth** - online/in app chat for mental health [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

**Cruse - Bereavement** - 0808 808 1677 everyday, see website for hours [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Victim Support** - 0808 168 9111 open 24/7 [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Galop - LGBT+ Domestic Abuse** - 0800 999 5428 10am-5pm, Mon to Fri  
**Galop - LGBT+ Hate Crime** - 020 7704 2040 10am-4pm, Mon to Fri [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

**Lincs Here4You helpline** - 0800 234 6342 open 24/7 [www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/lincolnshire/home](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/lincolnshire/home)  
(For self referral and support)

**Samaritans** - 116 123 open 24/7 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Shout** - text 'SHOUT' to 85258 open 24/7 [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)  
(Mental health support)

**Togetherall** - Improving mental health and wellbeing [www.togetherall.com/en-gb/](http://www.togetherall.com/en-gb/)

**Hub of Hope** [www.hubofhope.co.uk](http://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

### Over 25

**Mind** - 0300 123 3393 open 9am-6pm, Mon to Fri [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
(Mental health support)

**Samaritans** - 116 123 open 24/7 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Quell** - online/in-app chat for mental health [www.qwell.io](http://www.qwell.io)

**Cruse - Bereavement** - 0808 808 1677 everyday, see website for hours [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Victim Support** - 0808 168 9111 open 24/7 [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Respect - Men's Advice Line** - Domestic Abuse 10am-8pm, Mon to Fri [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

**Refuge - Domestic Abuse** - 0808 2000 247 open 24/7 [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

**Galop - LGBT+ Domestic Abuse** - 0800 999 5428 10am-5pm, Mon to Fri  
**Galop - LGBT+ Hate Crime** - 020 7704 2040 10am-4pm, Mon to Fri [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

**Lincs Mental Health helpline** - 0800 001 4331 open 24/7 [www.lpft.nhs.uk/our-services/self-care-and-accessing-support](http://www.lpft.nhs.uk/our-services/self-care-and-accessing-support)

**Shout** - text 'SHOUT' to 85258 open 24/7 [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)  
(Mental health support)

**SAD** - General Mental Health [www.studentsagainstdepression.org](http://www.studentsagainstdepression.org)

**Togetherall** - Improving mental health and wellbeing [www.togetherall.com/en-gb/](http://www.togetherall.com/en-gb/)

### Parents/ Carers

**Young Minds Parent Helpline** - 0808 802 5544 9.30am-4pm, Mon to Fri [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
(Support for parents)

**NSPCC** - 0808 800 5000 Mon to Fri 8am-10pm. Weekends 9am-6pm [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Cruse - Bereavement** - 0808 808 1677 everyday (see website for hours) [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Victim Support** - 0808 168 9111 open 24/7 [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

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(Mental health support)

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Boston College Safeguarding Team - [safeguarding@boston.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@boston.ac.uk)

