



**Stourbridge  
College**

**SAFEGUARDING  
Policy document**

**Policy and Guidelines on the Safeguarding  
of College students**

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# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate college commitment to safeguard our students that are aged under 18 or vulnerable from harm. To this end it is necessary to provide full and detailed information to College staff. Stourbridge College believes that:

- The welfare of the student is paramount
- All students without exception have a right to protection from abuse or harm regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

In order to achieve College aims and beliefs the following will be undertaken:

- The policy is to be approved, endorsed and then reviewed annually by the Board of Governors
- Roles and responsibilities will be made clear (i.e. governors, staff, agency staff, work experience providers, employers and volunteers)
- Students and parents will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- All concerns or allegations of abuse or harm will be taken seriously by governors, staff, employers, work experience providers and volunteers and responded to appropriately – this may require a referral to children's or adult services, and, in emergencies, and where necessary, the Police
- The College demonstrates commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of staff and associates
- Principles, legislation and guidance that underpin the policy are referred to
- Arrangements for policy and procedures review are clear
- Reference given to all associated policies and procedures which promote student safety and welfare with regards to health and safety and bullying/ harassment.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this policy is to provide information for all staff to enable them to practice the required duty of care responsibly and to comply fully with all relevant legislation. College staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

The six main elements of the policy are:

- Safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, governors, work experience providers and volunteers to work with students
- The raising of awareness of child protection issues for staff and associates
- The equipping of students with the skills needed to keep them safe
- The implementation of procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse
- Supporting students who have been abused in accordance with his/her protection plan
- The establishment of a safe environment in which students can learn and develop.

To ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures it is necessary to interlink this policy with other related College policies, for example, health and safety, anti bullying and self harm policies.

The objectives of the policy are:

- to establish and maintain an environment where students feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- to ensure students know there are members of staff whom they can approach if they are worried;
- to include opportunities in the tutorial curriculum for students to develop the skills they need to stay safe from harm.

In order to achieve both the aims and objectives the following will be put into place:

- A named senior manager (and deputy) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to child protection trained appropriate to the level at which they operate, for example training given to level 2
- A description of what abuse is with procedures of how to respond to it where there are concerns about a student's safety or welfare or concerns about the actions of a governor, staff member, contractor or volunteer
- A process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these in compliance with relevant legislation and kept for a time specified by the college insurance company
- Guidance on confidentiality, information sharing and legislation compliance clearly stating the protection of students is the most important consideration
- A code of conduct for governors, staff and volunteers. The consequences of breaching the code are to be clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and suitability of all governors, staff, contractors and volunteers who have direct or indirect (e.g. email) contact with students
- A complaints procedure which is open and publicised in which both staff and students can voice concerns about unacceptable and /or abusive behaviour towards young people and vulnerable adults
- Systems to ensure all staff working with students receive guidance and training opportunities about child protection in accordance with their roles and responsibilities
- Requirements for governors, franchise partners and volunteers to learn about child protection in accordance with their roles and responsibilities
- Consideration to be given regarding work experience, work placements and work based learning.

Stourbridge College aims to create a culture of security for its students, which demonstrates its concern for their welfare and safety; it also aims to provide a place where students will feel they can talk openly and will be listened to. The Safeguarding Policy is one aspect of this safe and secure culture.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

Stourbridge College recognises its legal duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and protecting them from 'significant harm'. These duties are defined within the following documents:

- Working together to Safeguard Children (DfES 2006)
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006)

- Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) – Safeguarding Children Procedures

Stourbridge College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people and vulnerable adults within the College environment and outside. The day-to-day contact with students allows staff to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in student behaviour or their failure to develop. Staff need to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring, aware of the procedures to be followed if suspicions arise and have the confidence to follow procedures.

## PROCEDURES

Stourbridge College will ensure all staff follow procedures set out by Dudley Safeguarding Children Board and take account of legislative guidance.

### Designated Senior Person: Role and Responsibilities

This role is undertaken by:	<b>Gill Coldicott</b>	<b>Head of Foundation Learning Ext 3494</b>
Secondary designated person:	<b>Rachael Edge</b>	<b>Student Welfare Officer Ext. 4319</b>
Both based at Hagley Road Campus.		

The designated senior person will oversee and/or fulfil the following areas identified by Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB).

- Know and follow practices regarding child protection as laid down by DSCB and associated legislative guidance
- Ensure all staff, including non teaching staff, are aware of these procedures by facilitating appropriate training
- Ensure all staff, employers, work experience providers and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and in referring any concerns to the designated senior person
- Ensure all staff are aware of what to do if there are concerns about a student
- To keep updated and secure records, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately and inform staff on a need to know basis
- Work with other agencies and make referrals where abuse is likely to occur or is suspected or a disclosure has been made
- Meet with agencies involved with the College to monitor students at risk
- Attend case conferences, or ensure the appropriate member of staff attend; ensure a report is prepared and take part in core groups as required
- Ensure there is a nominated governor responsible for Safeguarding.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, agency staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role
- Ensure parents are aware that the policy is available on request and make the policy available on the College website.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

Stourbridge College will follow the documents 'Safer Recruitment' and 'Managing Allegations Against People who work with Children' (sections 13 & 11 of the DSCB Children Procedures respectively). The Principal will deal with allegations made against a member of College staff. All allegations against the Principal will be referred to the Chair of Governors. All staff within Stourbridge College will adhere to the DSCF\* '*Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People*' (Dec 2009).

If any concerns or allegations are made against members of staff, in the first instance these should be discussed with Child Protection Senior Person who will inform the Principal. Measures will then be taken to contact the local authority designated persons such as the Child Protection Officer or the Independent Reviewing Officer. It is necessary to provide full names of the members of staff and student involved in the allegation, the date of birth of the student, addresses and details of any concerns to avoid delay. All allegations against people who work with those under 18 will be passed on to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) in accordance with the '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' document (DfES\*\*\* 2006, under review 2010) and the DSCB\*\* '*Safeguarding Children Procedures Part B Section 11*'.

\* *DSCF – Department for Children, Schools and Families.*

\*\* *DSCB – Dudley Safeguarding Children Board*

\*\*\* *DfES – Department for Education and Skills*

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In line with '*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*' (DfES 2006), the Principal and all other staff who work with students will undertake training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively. This will be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals for all staff. Stourbridge College will work in accordance with recommendations from DSCB and other national guidance. This specifies the training required for roles such as the Principal, the Child Protection Senior Person and the Governor for Child Protection.

## **INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with young people, particularly in the context of child protection. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Advice should be sought from local authority Social Care Team on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a young person).

Information should be stored in a secure place with restricted access by designated people and be maintained in line with data protection law (e.g. information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## **CURRICULUM**

Child protection and wider safeguarding issues relating to safety issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate, especially in Tutorial, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), practical vocational lessons and work experience/ placements.

## **IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND MONITORING**

Implementation will take place by ensuring this policy is discussed at governors meetings and ensuring all staff are made aware of its existence.

The policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

**It is everyone's duty to pass information regarding actual or suspected abuse to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding.**

It is a statutory requirement that staff act on suspicions of child abuse. They are to notify the Designated Senior Person immediately of any concerns. This information is strictly confidential and should only be discussed with anyone else on a 'need to know' basis.

Stourbridge College follows the DfES 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance 2006 which is summarised here as:

**Staff need to give the following due consideration and report concerns**

- If a student has frequent or untypical injuries, not normally associated with the explanation given
- If a student exhibits untypical behaviour or their behaviour or attitude to College changes significantly
- If a student indulges in sexual behaviour, either verbal or non verbal, that is unusually explicit or inappropriate
- If there are signs of neglect
- If it becomes apparent a student is to enter into a forced marriage.

**Dealing with disclosure**

The personal or subject tutor is often the person to notice or be informed of such signs. All lecturers are encouraged to foster a climate whereby students are able to approach them and talk freely.

The College recognises that abuse reported by students may relate to the College's Anti Bullying Policy which, therefore, underpins part of this policy. Other policies that are relevant include the Health and Safety policy and the Search and Screen policy.

**What to do:**

- Report your concerns to the Designated Senior Person who should contact the local authority Social Care Team or Police, where relevant, as soon as possible
- If this person is unavailable then contact the second designated person, the student Health and Welfare Advisor. This is to ensure there is no delay in seeking advice or making a referral
- The Social Care team and the Designated Senior Person will decide how to proceed and inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if relevant.

**Information for the Local Authority Social Care Team or the Police about suspected abuse**

To ensure this information is as helpful and useful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of disclosure or when concern is felt, which should include:

- the reason for the concern or disclosure;
- full name and date of birth of student;
- names of family/ household members;

- other agencies/ professionals involved with the student/family;
- any special needs or language support if English is not their first language.

## **Disclosures**

If a student makes a disclosure:

- listen without displaying shock or disbelief;
- do not ask leading questions; allow the student to talk openly;
- remain non judgemental;
- do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer concerns. Explain what will happen next;
- reassure the student that it is right to inform if they are being harmed or at risk of being harmed.

## **Support**

Dealing with child protection is always difficult and stressful. Members of staff should consider seeking support for themselves, initially from the Designated Senior Person.

## **Responding to allegations or suspicions (about someone working with young people)**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Stourbridge College, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to Designated Senior Person.

All allegations or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with the procedures. They will be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a person, who works with young people in connection with their employment, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a student or may have harmed a student;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a young person;
- behaved towards young people in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with young people.

These behaviours will be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual, emotional and neglect). This includes concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (sections 16-19, Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Grooming, i.e. meeting a child under 16 with the intent to commit a relevant offence (S15 Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Other grooming behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text / email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.)
- Possession of indecent photographs of children / pseudo photographs of children.
- Inappropriate relationships or behaviour towards vulnerable adults whilst in a position of trust.

The definition of working with young people includes paid, unpaid, volunteers and agency staff. It may include everyone who works in Stourbridge College, including administrative and other support staff.

### **Concerns raised regarding poor practice:**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the Vice Principal will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Senior Person or that the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Principal who will decide on whether disciplinary action should be taken.

If there is an allegation involving a member of staff child protection procedures will be followed. The Principal will be notified immediately, unless the allegation involves them, in which case the nominated Governor for Safeguarding should be informed.

### **Concerns about suspected abuse**

Any suspicions that a young person or vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff, work experience provider or volunteer must be reported to the Designated Senior Person who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the student in question and any other person who may be at risk.

The Designated Senior Person will refer the allegation to the local authority Social Care Team who may involve the police. All allegations against people who work with young people will be passed onto the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The parents/ carers of the student will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the local authority Social Care Team.

### **Internal enquiries and suspension**

The Principal will liaise with the Chair of Governors and make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care enquiries. Advice will also be sought from Stourbridge College Human Resources Director and the LADO.

Irrespective of the findings of the local authority Social Care team or the police the Principal will assess all individual cases to decide whether an individual can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Chair of Governors and the Principal must reach a decision based upon information, which could suggest the balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the student should remain of paramount importance throughout.

**Introduction**

Stourbridge College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the welfare and health and safety of students is paramount. Staff should seek to act professionally at all times but we recognise that tensions and misunderstanding can occur in the context of interaction between staff and students. This guidance aims to help staff safeguard students and reduce the risk of conduct which could be mistakenly interpreted as improper and lead to allegations being made against individuals.

**Principles**

- Staff are responsible for their own actions
- Staff should be seen to work in a transparent way
- All staff should report any incident which may give rise to concern to a senior member of staff.
- All staff and work placements providers should be aware of and follow the College's safeguarding procedures
- Staff who breach this code of conduct may be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures.
- Serious breach of this code may result in a referral being made to an external or statutory agency such as the local authority Social Care Team or the Police.
- All work placements providers should report any incidents which may give rise to concern to a senior member of staff.

**Duty of Care**

All staff have a duty of care to keep students safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and position of trust. This duty can be best exercised through the development of caring but professional relationships. Staff should avoid situations where their motives can be questioned.

If concerns or incidents arise staff are to:

- report incidents causing concern;
- record discussions and actions taken.

**Confidentiality**

Staff should never share information about students in a casual manner or allow student access to staff computer user privileges. Concerns about child protection issues should be reported to the Designated Senior Person.

Staff responsibilities:

- Never give out your own personal details or a student's personal details to students
- Do not give out a student's email address to other students
- Log off or lock your computer whenever leaving your computer unattended
- Do not allow students to use your computer unless you have logged off.

## **Behaviour**

Staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct at all times.

- Do not swear or use offensive or discriminatory language
- Do not use demeaning or racist comments (directly or indirectly)
- Never make sexual remarks to a student or discuss personal sexual relationships
- Never make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of young people
- Avoid any communication which could be interpreted as sexually provocative
- End the discussion if it becomes uncomfortable or embarrassing
- Never make personal comments which humiliate a student or may seem to do so
- Dress in a manner which will avoid inappropriate comments
- Follow the ICT safety policy and report any breaches
- Never act in a way that can be perceived as threatening
- Under no circumstances should staff access inappropriate images at College
- Storing or disseminating such material is illegal and if proven will lead to the person being barred from working with young people.

## **Social Contact**

Staff should never make contact with a student outside of College for the purpose of friendship. This is particularly important when there is a possibility of a student becoming infatuated with a member of staff.

- Do not accept gifts that could be construed as bribes (end of term gifts are fine)
- Never give out personal contact details, mobile phone numbers or personal email addresses
- Report any suspected infatuation
- Report any situation which you may feel compromises your professional standing.

## **Physical Contact, Intervention and Control of Students**

It is not necessary to have physical contact with students even when they are distressed and this should be avoided at all times. Try to defuse a situation before it escalates.

### **Never endanger your own safety**

## **One to One Situations**

Staff are vulnerable to accusations when working alone with a student. If possible leave the door open or use a room with a window in the door. Never meet a student away from College unless the Head of Faculty, Assistant Principal or Director has given permission. Avoid travelling in a car with one student and inform someone if the situation is unavoidable (see the Transport to Hospital procedure).

## **Educational Visits and College Activities**

Staff should take extra care in less formal situations and remember they are still in a position of trust. The College follows the advice of the Vice Principal Finance and the Health and Safety Officer.

## **Whistleblowing**

Staff should be able to voice their concerns without fear of repercussions.

- Report any behaviour that concerns you to a senior manager
- Record and date concerns.

*End*