

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how the College safeguards children, apprentices and adults at risk, and how all staff, contractors, volunteers, employers and visitors must work to prevent and respond to harm. It applies to all College sites, online environments and work-based learning/placement settings.

2. Definitions

Child/Young person: Anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at risk: A person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding: Protecting children and adults at risk from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring safe and effective care; and enabling safe, effective learning and participation.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – current edition.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance (updated 2023).
- Online Safety Act 2023.
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004; Education Act 2002.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and DBS requirements.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Policy Statement

The College places the welfare of children, apprentices and adults at risk at the centre of all activity. We maintain a culture of vigilance; listen to learners and act on concerns; identify early help needs; and work in partnership with statutory and community agencies to keep learners safe on campus, online and in the workplace.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body/Employer Forum: Ensures statutory compliance, approves policy, receives annual safeguarding and filtering/monitoring reports, and holds leaders to account.

Principal: Leads safeguarding culture and ensures resources, training and assurance are in place.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Provides strategic lead; manages referrals; liaises with LSCP/MASH, Channel/Prevent; maintains secure records; oversees filtering/monitoring with IT; assures training and policy implementation.

Deputy DSLs/Safeguarding Officers: Act for the DSL; receive and act on concerns; provide advice and support.

All Staff and Volunteers: Are trained, vigilant and know how to recognise, record and report concerns immediately.

IT & Estates Leads: Implement effective technical and physical safeguards; support filtering/monitoring and site safety; escalate concerns to the DSL.

Curriculum & Quality Leaders: Embed safeguarding, online safety and inclusion in curriculum and tutorials; gather learner voice.

Employers/Placement Providers: Provide safe environments; complete risk assessments; report concerns to the College immediately; cooperate with investigations.

6. Safer Recruitment and Suitability

- Recruitment follows safer recruitment practice including advertisement wording, application scrutiny, structured interview questions, references and appropriate pre-appointment checks (identity, right to work, qualifications, DBS, barred list where eligible).
- Proportionate risk assessment and supervision are in place pending checks where lawful and appropriate.
- Suitability is monitored throughout employment, including a low-level concerns process and clear routes to the LADO for allegations that meet the harm threshold.

7. Training, Awareness and Culture

- All staff complete safeguarding and Prevent induction and receive at least annual updates. Role-specific training is provided for DSLs, investigators, IT/monitoring staff and placement leads.
- Staff understand early help, child-on-child abuse, online safety (including filtering/monitoring), mental health indicators and information sharing.

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- Leaders promote an open culture where concerns are raised promptly (including whistleblowing) and learner voice informs practice.

8. Early Help, Curriculum and Learner Voice

The College provides timely early help and signposting. Safeguarding, consent, respectful behaviour, online safety and mental health are embedded across tutorials and enrichment. Learners are shown how to report concerns and how the College responds.

Identifying, Recording and Reporting Concerns

- Recognise: notice indicators including physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, exploitation (CSE/CCE), domestic abuse, discriminatory abuse, online harms and radicalisation.
- Respond: listen; reassure; explain you must share; avoid leading questions; record facts contemporaneously.
- Report: contact the DSL/Deputy immediately. If a child is at immediate risk, call 999.
- Refer: the DSL makes referrals to MASH/Children’s Social Care, Police, Channel/Prevent and other agencies, and records outcomes.
- Escalate: if staff disagree with decisions, they should use the College escalation procedure and LSCP escalation routes.

9. Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns about Staff

Allegations that an adult who works with children has harmed or may have harmed a child, committed a relevant offence, or behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk, will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold are recorded and addressed under the low-level concerns framework.

Support is provided to all parties and confidentiality maintained as far as possible.

10. Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring

- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, with defined roles for the DSL and IT Lead, and termly effectiveness reviews.
- Decisions on what is blocked/allowed are documented, risk-assessed and reported to senior leaders/governance annually.
- Staff receive training on interpreting monitoring alerts and escalating concerns. Learners are educated about online risks (e.g. grooming, abuse, misinformation/disinformation, extremism).

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11. Prevent Duty

- We have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Staff complete Prevent training and know how to identify and refer concerns to the DSL.
- The DSL assesses risk and, where appropriate, makes a referral to the local Prevent/Channel panel. Freedom of expression is balanced with safeguarding duties using risk assessment for events and speakers.

12. Inclusion, Equality and SEND

- Safeguarding practice will not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic. We actively advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- We identify needs early and make reasonable adjustments so that learners with SEND, disabilities and other vulnerabilities can access learning and support safely.
- Safeguarding information is available in accessible formats on request.

13. Work-Based Learning and Placements

- Before placements commence we complete safeguarding risk assessments proportionate to the setting and learner needs.
- Employers/placement providers confirm their safeguarding arrangements and reporting routes; concerns are reported to the College DSL immediately.
- Visiting staff monitor welfare and learning conditions; issues are escalated without delay.

14. Site Security and Visits

- We operate visitor identification, signing-in and supervision procedures and maintain secure access controls across sites.
- Risk assessments cover off-site visits, and high-risk activities, including emergency/lone-working arrangements.

15. Information Sharing, Records and Data Protection

- Safeguarding concerns are recorded promptly on secure systems. Records are accurate, factual, dated and signed, and kept separate from academic files.
- We share information with agencies where lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect a child or adult at risk. Consent is sought where appropriate but is not a barrier to sharing when safety is at stake.

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- We process safeguarding data under UK GDPR/DPA 2018 using legal obligation, public task, vital interests or substantial public interest conditions as appropriate. Retention follows our Records Schedule.

16. Whistleblowing and Complaints

Staff and learners can raise concerns under the Whistleblowing and Complaints Policies without fear of detriment. Safeguarding complaints relating to case handling may be escalated to the DSL, Principal or the LSCP as appropriate.

17. Monitoring and Review

- The DSL submits termly reports on safeguarding activity, training, cases, trends and filtering/monitoring to senior leadership/governance.
- This policy is reviewed annually or sooner following legislative or guidance changes, serious incidents, or lessons learned.

Appendix A – Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Barbara Cooper - 07803 903047 - bcooper@caw.ac.uk

Deputy DSLs/Safeguarding Officers:

Claire Defries - 01480 422060 - cdefries@caw.ac.uk

Deborah Gould - 01480 422060 - dgould@caw.ac.uk

Ruth Nield - 01480 422060 - rniel@caw.ac.uk

Mel Young - 01480 422060 - myoung@caw.ac.uk

Appendix B – Reporting a Concern (Quick Guide)

- Listen, reassure, explain you must share
- Record facts (time/date/people/what was said)
- Report to DSL/Deputy immediately (same day)
- If at immediate risk, call 999
- DSL decides on referral, records actions and outcomes

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1. Aims and Implementation

This Policy has been assessed for equality impact by Human Resources.

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure the policy does not unlawfully discriminate against any individual or group and supports the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Evidence and Data

Barriers could result in		
Equality Group	Impact	Assessment
Age	Positive	Strong alignment with KCSIE ensures robust safeguarding for children and young people, while also supporting adults at risk.
Disability	Positive	Policy includes early identification, reasonable adjustments and targeted support for individuals with SEND, disabilities and mental health needs.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral/Positive	Safeguarding processes promote dignity, respect and protection from harm. Inclusive practice helps ensure individuals feel safe to report concerns.
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Policy applies equally to all individuals.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Safeguarding and welfare considerations support individuals who may be more vulnerable, ensuring appropriate protection and support.
Race	Neutral/Positive	Policy promotes non-discriminatory safeguarding and requires monitoring to ensure no disproportionate impact on different groups.
Religion or Belief	Neutral/Positive	Safeguarding processes respect individual beliefs while ensuring protection from harm. Care is taken to apply procedures proportionately.
Sex and Sexual Orientation	Positive	Policy protects individuals from abuse, harassment and exploitation, including gender-based and sexual harm. Promotes a safe and inclusive environment.

3. Assessment of Impact

No adverse impact has been identified. The policy is considered to have a neutral and/or positive impact across protected characteristics.

The policy will be monitored to ensure no disproportionate impact occurs and reviewed if required.

Review Arrangements and Version Control:

This version of The College of Animal Welfare’s Safeguarding Policy replaces all previous versions. This document is subject to regular revision and maintained electronically by its owner. Electronic copies are version controlled. Printed copies are not subject to this control. The College of Animal Welfare will review this policy regularly as part of internal continuous improvement processes and will revise it as and when necessary, in response to changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or inspections, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous situations.

Documented changes from previous version	
Section	New document
Equality Impact Assessment	New section