Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

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Approving Body: Corporation	**ELT contact**: Executive of Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience
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*This procedure may need to be reviewed before the review date stated, to reflect changes in government and other agencies' advice, guidance and legislation

Revision Log

Date	Version No.	Brief detail of change
Sep 2024	1	New policy
Sep 2025	2	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 replaced with 2025. Disciplinary process changed to behaviour management process. Updated Appendix 1 - contact details. Section 7 revised.
Aug 2026	3	Full policy review and updated as required

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Introduction

City College Plymouth (the 'College') is a leading provider of vocational, professional and technical training in the South West, that strives to provide a learning environment and organisational culture that impacts positively on the health, wellbeing and sustainability of our community, to enable all our students and staff to achieve their full potential.

The term 'College Community' includes all staff, governors, students, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

Our vision:

The learning destination of choice.

Our core values:

- Respect
- Ownership
- Integrity

Definitions and Scope

This policy applies to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk encountered through the College's teaching, research, professional services, placements, outreach activities and other College business. Different legal duties apply depending on whether the individual is under or over the age of 18.

Child
For the purposes of this policy, a child is any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, in accordance with the Children Act 1989.

This definition applies regardless of whether the individual:

- Is living independently;
- Is studying in further or higher education;
- Is employed or undertaking an apprenticeship;
- Is in custody, hospital or military service; or
- Is otherwise considered independent.

Throughout this policy, the terms child, children, young person and young people refer only to individuals under the age of 18.

Safeguarding concerns relating to children must be managed in accordance with the Children Act 1989, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Adult
For the purposes of this policy, an adult is any person aged 18 or over.

Reaching the age of 18 means the individual is no longer legally a child and child safeguarding legislation no longer applies.
Not all adults require safeguarding intervention. Most adults are able to make their own decisions and manage risks independently.

Adult at Risk

An Adult at Risk is an adult aged 18 years or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met);
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- Because of those care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves from the abuse, neglect or risk of it.

This definition reflects Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk must be considered under the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance.

Applying this Policy

Staff must first establish whether the individual concerned is:

- A child (under 18) – follow the College's Child Safeguarding procedures.
- An adult aged 18 or over who meets the Adult at Risk criteria – follow the Adult Safeguarding procedures.
- An adult aged 18 or over who does not meet the Adult at Risk criteria – concerns should normally be managed through the College's wellbeing, student support, health or disciplinary procedures unless safeguarding thresholds are subsequently met.

Where there is any uncertainty about which pathway applies, staff must seek advice immediately from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Coordinator.

Part one, Safeguarding Children

'Child' by law means anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

'Child', therefore, means 'child or children and a young person or young people' throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution, does not change their status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.

Whilst the term 'vulnerable adult' has historically been used in safeguarding guidance, current legislation and statutory guidance use the term 'adult at risk' or 'adult with care and support needs'. Under the Care Act 2014, an adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs), is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and, as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse, neglect or risk of it.

The College adopts the terminology used within the Care Act 2014 and the accompanying Care and Support Statutory Guidance, whilst recognising that the term *'vulnerable adult'* may still be encountered in older guidance or by partner agencies. For the purposes of this policy, references should be understood in line with the current statutory definition of an adult at risk.

City College Plymouth recognises its duty of care and places the highest importance on safeguarding, the safety, wellbeing and mental health of students which is paramount in all College activities. The College recognises that members of staff, students, partners, visitors, contractors and subcontractors working on behalf of the College have an important role to play in safeguarding, in particular, the welfare of young people and vulnerable persons and preventing abuse and/or harm. City College Plymouth recognises that ‘safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility’, to adopt a ‘child-centred approach’ (taking into account a child’s wishes and feelings) and to provide a safe learning environment.

This includes protecting children and adults at risk from maltreatment including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Self-Harm (See Appendix A)
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, discriminatory, homophobic, biphobia and transphobic (HBT) bullying)
- Exploitation both sexual and criminal
- Honour based abuse
- Child on child abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (including child on the child)
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images/or videos
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Radicalisation for violent extremism or terrorism
- Online and Offline grooming
- Sexting, up-skirting, Sextortion
- So called ‘honour’-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
- Knife crime
- Suicide prevention (See Appendix D)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing 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.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children and adults at risk to have the best outcomes and for children to enter adulthood successfully supported by a curriculum which will develop children's, young people's and adults' understanding, awareness and resilience of participating safely in a modern British community.
- Protecting children and adults from radicalisation and extremism through the implementation of the PREVENT duty.

In addition, the College also recognises that some individuals are potentially at greater risk of harm or potential harm (both online and offline), due to their particular circumstances, eg, but not limited to:

- Care Experienced or Care Leavers
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Child In Need and Child Protection plans
- Mental health
- SEN or SEND

The college also has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

*For the purpose of this policy, the term young person/people is used with the same definition as a child.

1. Key Points

Identification of abuse and 'significant harm' is difficult. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. The indicators given below are not prescriptive and must be regarded in the context of the individual's life.

1.1 Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. 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 the ill-treatment of others. This can be relevant 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 occur in intimate personal relationships between peers. 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 by another child or children.

1.2 Physical abuse

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.

1.3 Emotional 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, prejudice-based, discriminatory, or (HBT), 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.

1.4 Sexual 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.

1.5 Sexual Harassment and Violence of Children by other Children

Sexual harassment and violence of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and we must be aware that this can happen in or outside college as well as online and there is a need for an 'it could happen here' approach.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. 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.

1.6 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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

1.6 Bullying

City College Plymouth will not tolerate any form of bullying and all staff and students are responsible for making sure that the college is free from bullying. Any bullying issues should be dealt with under the procedures specified in the specific documents Student Anti-Bullying Policy and Student Anti-Bullying Procedures. All staff must challenge and deal with any form of bullying and, if necessary, seek advice and support from the Safeguarding Officers in the college.

1.7 Health and Safety

City College Plymouth 'actively promotes an excellent health and safety culture' and will actively promote the concept of the 'safe learner' in a safe environment. Any risk to the welfare and safety of the college community is to be safeguarded by the practices and procedures laid down in the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Statement and the college's risk assessment and health and safety checks.

1.8 Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

City College Plymouth 'believes that every individual has the right to fair treatment, respect and understanding'. The college's Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy makes it clear that issues of equality and diversity contribute to the college's safeguarding commitment by requiring that all staff, students, governors, agents and visitors make a contribution to a safe

environment and the welfare of the college community combating mistreatment and unfairness.

2. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The College recognises that timely and appropriate information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. Staff must always act in the best interests of the child and should not allow concerns about confidentiality or data protection to prevent them from sharing information where it is necessary to safeguard or promote a child's welfare.

When deciding whether to share information, staff must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and relevant safeguarding legislation, applying the following principles:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- Concerns about sharing information must never prevent appropriate action being taken to protect a child from harm.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or restrict the lawful sharing of personal information for safeguarding purposes.
- Where it is necessary to share special category personal data to safeguard a child or an adult at risk, staff may do so without consent where there is an appropriate legal basis, including where:

    - It is not possible to obtain consent;
    - It is not reasonable to expect consent to be obtained; or
    - Seeking consent would place the child or another person at increased risk of harm.

Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child or young person who discloses abuse or neglect. They should explain that the information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to keep them, or others, safe.

3. Reports of Sexual Violence or Sexual Harassment

If a child asks the College not to share information about an incident of sexual violence or sexual harassment, staff must not automatically agree to this request. Although the wishes of the child are an important consideration, there may be circumstances where information must be shared to safeguard the child or others.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Coordinator will carefully balance the child's wishes with the College's legal safeguarding duties and will consider:

- the child's wishes, feelings and best interests;
- the nature and seriousness of the allegation;
- whether there is an ongoing risk to the child or to others;
- whether other children or adults may be at risk;
- whether the incident may constitute a criminal offence;
- the child's age, maturity and understanding; and
- any legal duties to share information with external agencies.

Parents or carers should normally be informed unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm or would prejudice a police investigation or safeguarding enquiry. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, an immediate referral must be made to Children's Social Care in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Reports of rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are criminal offences. The DSL or Safeguarding Coordinator will consider, in consultation with the child wherever appropriate, whether a report should be made to the police and will work with Children's Social Care and other relevant agencies to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are implemented.

4. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff have a responsibility to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about the safety and welfare of children. Staff must be alert to the signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns and understand that these issues rarely occur in isolation. Multiple safeguarding concerns may overlap and should always be considered within the context of the child's individual circumstances.

Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help where a child:

- Is disabled or has additional needs;
- has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), with or without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
- is a young carer;
- is from a service or military family;
- has experienced bereavement;
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social behaviour, criminal exploitation, gangs, county lines, organised crime or serious violence, including knife crime;
- Is frequently missing, or has gone missing, from education, home or care;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation;
- Is vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism;
- Is viewing harmful or inappropriate online content or is developing unsafe online relationships;
- Is living in circumstances that present challenges, including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or parental mental ill health;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol;

- Is experiencing mental ill health;
- Has returned home from care;
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse, including female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage;
- is privately fostered;
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending;
- Is persistently absent from education or is not receiving full-time education; or
- Has experienced repeated suspensions or is at risk of permanent exclusion.

Staff should always exercise professional curiosity and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Team whenever they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

5. Responding to a Disclosure

If a child discloses abuse, neglect or another safeguarding concern, staff must:

- Listen carefully and take the disclosure seriously;
- allow the child to speak freely and avoid asking leading or investigative questions;
- Remain calm and avoid expressing shock, disbelief or judgement;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- Explain that the information cannot be kept confidential and will only be shared with those who need to know in order to keep them or others safe;
- Make a written record as soon as possible using the child's own words wherever possible, distinguishing clearly between fact, observation and professional opinion; and
- Report the concern immediately in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart (Appendix A), completing the appropriate safeguarding referral documentation.

Information relating to the disclosure must only be shared with those directly involved in managing the safeguarding concern.

Staff must not allow the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Coordinator to delay appropriate safeguarding action. Where immediate action is required to protect a child from harm, staff should contact Children's Social Care or the Police and inform the DSL or Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as practicable.

Staff should be aware that some children may:

- Not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse or neglect;
- Not know how or when to ask for help;
- Feel embarrassed, ashamed, frightened or threatened; or
- Face additional barriers to disclosure because of disability, communication needs, culture, language, sexual orientation or other vulnerabilities.

These factors must never prevent staff from acting on concerns or seeking advice from the DSL.

6. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the United Kingdom and is recognised as a form of child abuse with serious and lifelong physical and psychological consequences.
The indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM, or may already have undergone FGM, are set out in Appendix E of this policy.

In accordance with statutory guidance, teachers have a mandatory duty to report to the police where they:

- Are informed by a girl under the age of 18 that FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, and have no reason to believe the procedure was necessary for her physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

Such reports must be made directly to the police as soon as possible. Teachers must also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), unless they have been specifically instructed not to do so by the police or another relevant authority.

Any member of staff who suspects that a child is at risk of FGM, or suspects that FGM may have taken place but does not meet the mandatory reporting duty, must immediately report their concerns to the DSL and follow the College's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must never examine a child to determine whether FGM has taken place.
Where concerns relate to an adult aged 18 or over, staff must follow the Adult Safeguarding procedures set out in Part Two of this policy.

7. Referrals

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Coordinator will make, or support staff to make, an immediate referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

Staff may make a referral directly if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm. Where this occurs, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Coordinator must be informed as soon as possible.

Children's Social Care should acknowledge the referral and determine the appropriate course of action within one working day. The DSL, Safeguarding Coordinator or referrer must follow up if no response is received and ensure that all actions and outcomes are accurately recorded.

If, following a referral, a child's circumstances do not appear to be improving, the DSL or Safeguarding Coordinator will follow local escalation procedures to ensure that appropriate action is taken and the child's welfare remains paramount.

Record-Keeping

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. Where staff have shared concerns with the DSL/DDSLs, this should always be followed up in writing, as per the reporting concern flowchart (Appendix 2).

Record-keeping should also include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme, etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

If a child for whom the College has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another educational institution, the Safeguarding Coordinator will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely.

This will be done to allow the new college to have support in place when the child arrives.

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the Safeguarding Coordinator will speak to the DSL of the receiving college and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

Part two, Safeguarding Adults

1. Definitions

The term *safeguarding* can be interpreted in different ways. This policy adopts consistent terminology to support a shared understanding, enabling appropriate and consistent responses across the College.

1.1 Safeguarding (capital 'S')

Safeguarding refers to the formal adult safeguarding process under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, where a concern is referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a safeguarding enquiry.

For the duty to make enquiries to apply, all three of the following criteria must be met:

- The adult has care and support needs (whether or not these needs are being met by the Local Authority);
- The adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of their care and support needs, the adult is unable to protect themselves from the abuse, neglect, or risk of it.

1.2 Safeguarding (lowercase 's')

Many adults with mental health conditions or other care and support needs may experience increased vulnerability because of the complexity of their circumstances. They may require coordinated support from services such as the NHS, social care or the College to help manage risks in their daily lives.

However, they are not necessarily experiencing abuse or neglect, and therefore may not meet the threshold for a formal safeguarding enquiry under the Care Act 2014.

Although the College is not subject to the statutory safeguarding duties within the Care Act 2014, this policy adopts the Act's definition of Safeguarding (capital 'S') as the basis for responding to safeguarding concerns.

It is important to recognise that an individual may have both lowercase 's' safeguarding needs (requiring coordinated support) and capital 'S' Safeguarding needs (requiring a safeguarding referral).

- Lowercase 's' safeguarding concerns should be managed through the College's Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Mental Health First Aid Procedure

1.3 Abuse, neglect and self-neglect

Definitions of abuse, neglect and self-neglect are provided in Appendix C

1.4 Why might a student be unable to protect themselves?

A student may be unable to protect themselves for a range of reasons, including (but not limited to):

- Difficulties with executive functioning associated with conditions such as autism or ADHD;
- Lacking the skills, opportunity or resources to recognise or respond to risk;
- lacking mental capacity to make particular decisions because of disability, mental illness or substance misuse;
- Living in an environment where there is a significant power imbalance or dependence on others;
- Experiencing domestic abuse, coercion or controlling behaviour;
- Limited resilience, confidence or practical resources to keep themselves safe.

1.5 Who may have care and support needs?

Examples include, but are not limited to, people who:

- Have a physical disability;
- Have a learning disability or learning difficulty;
- Have a sensory impairment;
- Experience mental ill health, including personality disorders;
- Have a long-term health condition;
- Misuse drugs or alcohol;
- Are care experienced;
- Are young carers; or
- Are living in temporary or insecure accommodation.

1.6 Examples of care and support

Care and support may include, but is not limited to:

- Accommodation or housing support;
- Financial support;
- Counselling, psychotherapy or psychological support;
- Healthcare or medical treatment;
- Assistance with personal care, including dressing, washing, eating or drinking; and
- Support to maintain social relationships and community connections.

1.7 The Six Safeguarding Principles

The Care Act 2014 sets out six principles that underpin adult safeguarding practice:

Empowerment – supporting people to make informed decisions and give informed consent wherever possible.

Prevention – taking action to prevent harm before it occurs.

Proportionality – responding in the least intrusive way that is appropriate to the level of risk.

Protection – providing support and representation for those at greatest risk.

Partnership – working collaboratively with individuals, services and communities to prevent, identify and respond to abuse and neglect.

Accountability – ensuring safeguarding practice is transparent, responsible and accountable.

1.8 Disclosures

An adult safeguarding disclosure may occur when:

- An adult tells someone that they have experienced, or are concerned they may be experiencing, abuse or neglect; or
- Another person reports witnessing abuse or neglect, or provides information that indicates abuse or neglect may have occurred or may be occurring.

Where a safeguarding concern is identified, staff must follow the Safeguarding Referral Pathway (Appendix A), ensuring that concerns are shared with the appropriate people, at the appropriate time and in accordance with College procedures.

A safeguarding concern must be recorded, a Safeguarding referral can be submitted by referring through Safeguarding 24 or discussed with a Safeguarding officer or coordinator to ensure all information is recorded confidentially and monitored.

A safeguarding referral may be made by any member of the College community, including the adult at risk.

Following any disclosure or safeguarding concern, there should be an immediate assessment of risk to determine whether urgent action is required to protect the individual or others from immediate harm.

Unless:

- There is an immediate risk to life;
- The adult lacks the mental capacity to make the relevant decision; or
- There is a significant risk of harm to others,

any immediate protective action should be taken, wherever possible, in accordance with the adult's views, wishes and preferred outcomes.

Examples of immediate action

Immediate action may include:

- Calling 999 if a crime is in progress;
- Calling 999 in a medical emergency;
- Contacting NHS 111 for urgent medical advice;
- Contacting the police via 101 where the matter is non-emergency;
- Advising or supporting the individual to contact their GP or another healthcare professional;
- Supporting the individual to return home safely;
- Arranging for someone to remain with the individual so they are not left alone where this is appropriate; and
- Taking reasonable steps to manage any immediate risk to other people.

If immediate action is required, do not let the absence of a designated safeguarding lead delay appropriate action. Staff should consider speaking to a member of VCE and/or take advice from NHS 11 or Police 101. In these circumstances, actions can then be shared with the relevant staff - see Appendix 1

A disclosure may be related to a current or past event, and can be very traumatic for the adult. It may have taken a long time for them to decide whether to tell someone - they may feel they won't be believed, nothing will happen, or that their safety could be at risk. Do:

- Take the disclosure seriously;
- Accept what they are saying;
- Listen carefully and don't interrupt them;
- Try to remember the words used by the adult, and anything they want to happen next;
- Stay calm and avoid reactions such as shock, disbelief or anger;
- Ask questions to establish basic facts;
- Establish if the adult feels safe now, to identify if immediate action may be required;
- Establish any emotional support they may need after you leave;
- Talk about the safeguarding adults process, what it means and **seek consent to make a referral,** you may want to offer help them submit a referral themselves;
- Explain what will happen next and when they can expect to hear from someone;
- Reassure them that they will be involved in any decisions;
- When talking about what will happen next, think about any specific communication needs they may have and how to make sure information is accessible.

If someone, usually a student / member of staff, puts forward an event of significant concern that they have witnessed it is imperative a statement is obtained from that person (it needs to be written by the witness/es).

1.9 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Adults have a general right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves;

The six safeguarding principles should underpin all safeguarding practice, including information-sharing.

The Designated Staff with Responsibility for Young People and Adults at Risk

Applications from Individuals Subject to Ongoing Police Investigations

Where the College becomes aware that an applicant is subject to an ongoing police investigation, or where there are other known safeguarding concerns, the application will be considered on an individual basis.

The existence of a police investigation will not automatically prevent admission or result in an application being delayed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will undertake a safeguarding risk assessment, taking account of the nature of the concerns, the level of potential risk to children, young people, vulnerable adults and the wider College community, information available from relevant statutory agencies, and whether appropriate safeguarding measures can effectively manage any identified risk.

Where insufficient information is available to complete an appropriate safeguarding assessment, the College may defer an admissions decision while further information is sought from the Police or other relevant safeguarding partners. Any decision to defer admission will be lawful, proportionate, evidence-based and subject to regular review.

Information relating to ongoing investigations will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the College's Information Sharing and Safeguarding policies. Decisions will be made with due regard to the rights of the applicant and the College's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Part Three, Prevent

1. Purpose

Introduction

The College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which students, staff and visitors can study, work and thrive. As part of its safeguarding responsibilities, the College recognises its statutory duty to help prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

PREVENT is one of the four strands of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), alongside Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The purpose of Prevent is to stop people from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting terrorism by identifying concerns early, safeguarding those who may be susceptible to radicalisation and providing appropriate support before criminal activity occurs.

PREVENT is a safeguarding duty. It is not intended to criminalise people for holding controversial or unpopular opinions, nor is it designed to restrict lawful debate, academic enquiry or freedom of expression. The College's approach is proportionate, evidence-based and centred on safeguarding the welfare of individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

The College is committed to balancing its Prevent responsibilities with its legal duties to protect freedom of speech, academic freedom, equality and human rights.

2. Statutory Duty

Legal Framework

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory duty on specified authorities, including higher and further education providers, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The College fulfils this duty through its safeguarding arrangements, risk assessment processes, staff training, student support services and partnership working with relevant statutory agencies.

Prevent is embedded within the College's wider safeguarding framework and should be considered alongside other safeguarding concerns, recognising that individuals may present with multiple or overlapping vulnerabilities.

Prevent Objectives

The Prevent strategy has three key objectives:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism;
- Safeguard individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation through early identification and appropriate support; and
- Support the rehabilitation and disengagement of individuals involved in terrorism where appropriate.

The College's role is focused on safeguarding and early intervention. Criminal investigations remain the responsibility of the police and other law enforcement agencies.

3. Key Definitions

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism that may lead to terrorism. Radicalisation is rarely caused by a single factor and is often influenced by a combination of personal circumstances, vulnerabilities and exposure to extremist material or individuals.

Extremism

For the purposes of Prevent, extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that seeks to:

- Undermine or destroy the rights and freedoms of others;
- Undermine or replace the UK's democratic system and institutions; or
- Create an environment that enables others to pursue these aims.

Holding strong political, religious or philosophical beliefs, expressing lawful opinions, participating in peaceful protest or engaging in legitimate academic debate does not, in itself, constitute extremism.

Terrorism

The Terrorism Act 2000 defines terrorism as the use or threat of serious violence or other serious action intended to influence the government or intimidate the public for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

Susceptibility to Radicalisation

People of any age, background or circumstance can become susceptible to radicalisation. Factors that may increase susceptibility include social isolation, personal grievances, significant life changes, mental ill-health, exposure to extremist content online, or a desire for identity,

belonging or purpose. These factors do not automatically indicate a risk of terrorism but may increase vulnerability in some circumstances.

Understanding the Risk

The current terrorism threat to the United Kingdom is assessed nationally and may change in response to intelligence and emerging risks. Universities and colleges have an important role in recognising concerns early and ensuring that appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

Current national assessments recognise that the terrorist threat is diverse and evolving. Individuals may be influenced by a range of ideologies, including Islamist extremism, Extreme Right-Wing extremism or mixed, unstable or emerging ideologies. Increasingly, individuals may adopt elements from more than one ideology or become fixated on violence without subscribing to a single ideological belief system.

The growth of online communities, social media platforms and encrypted communications has increased opportunities for radicalisation. Staff should remain alert to concerns arising from online activity as well as behaviour observed in person.

The Prevent Learning Review following the Southport attack reinforced the importance of recognising individuals whose fixation on serious violence may sit alongside complex personal, mental health or safeguarding needs. Effective information sharing, professional curiosity and timely safeguarding interventions remain essential.

4. Recognising Concerns

General Principles

There is no single profile of a person who may be susceptible to radicalisation. Individuals can be affected regardless of age, ethnicity, faith, nationality, gender or background.

Changes in behaviour should always be considered within the wider context of an individual's circumstances. Staff should avoid making assumptions based on protected characteristics, personal beliefs or lawful political or religious views.

Concerns should be considered where there is evidence that an individual may be becoming susceptible to extremist influences or expressing support for terrorism.

Possible Indicators

Indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Expressing support for terrorism or terrorist organisations;
- Repeated use of language promoting violence, hatred or intolerance;
- Accessing or distributing extremist material without a legitimate academic or professional purpose;
- Significant changes in behaviour, relationships or social networks linked to extremist influences;

- Becoming isolated and increasingly influenced by extremist individuals or online communities;
- Fixation on mass casualty attacks, weapons or previous terrorist incidents;
- Attempts to recruit or encourage others to support extremist causes.

None of these indicators, in isolation, confirms that a person is being radicalised. Staff should consider the overall context and seek advice whenever they are concerned.

College Responsibilities

The College is committed to meeting its Prevent Duty through a proportionate, risk-based approach that forms part of its wider safeguarding arrangements.

The College will:

- Maintain appropriate governance arrangements for Prevent;
- Assess the risk of people being drawn into terrorism and implement measures to reduce identified risks;
- Provide appropriate Prevent awareness training for staff;
- Promote a culture of safeguarding, inclusion and respect;
- Ensure students have access to appropriate welfare and pastoral support;
- Work collaboratively with statutory partners, including the police and local safeguarding agencies where appropriate;
- Maintain appropriate procedures for managing external speakers and events;
- Ensure concerns are managed confidentially, proportionately and in accordance with data protection legislation.

PREVENT is everyone's responsibility. All members of the College community should understand how to recognise safeguarding concerns and know how to report them.

Risk Assessment

The College will maintain a Prevent risk assessment which is reviewed regularly and whenever significant changes occur to the national or local threat picture.

The assessment will consider factors including:

- The nature of the College's activities;
- External speakers and events;
- Student welfare;
- Online safety and use of digital platforms;
- Partnerships with external organisations;
- Physical security;
- Emerging local or national risks.

Where risks are identified, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented and monitored.

Partnership Working

PREVENT is delivered through partnership working.

The College will work with relevant agencies, including local authorities, Counter Terrorism Policing, regional Prevent teams, safeguarding partners and other statutory organisations where appropriate.

Information will be shared only where lawful, necessary and proportionate to safeguard individuals or protect others from harm.

Where concerns indicate that an individual may benefit from specialist support, referrals may be made to Prevent or Channel in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements.

5. Training and Awareness

The College will ensure that staff receive appropriate Prevent training that is proportionate to their role and responsibilities.

Training will enable staff to:

- Understand the aims of the Prevent Duty;
- Recognise factors that may increase susceptibility to radicalisation;
- Identify safeguarding concerns;
- Understand how to report concerns appropriately; and
- Balance Prevent responsibilities with equality, diversity, freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Staff working in safeguarding, student support and other specialist roles may receive additional training appropriate to their responsibilities.

The College will review training regularly to ensure it reflects current legislation, national guidance and emerging risks.

Student Welfare and Support

Student wellbeing is central to the College's approach to Prevent.

Students experiencing personal difficulties, isolation, mental ill-health or other vulnerabilities should be offered appropriate support through the College's wellbeing and safeguarding services.

The College recognises that many factors associated with vulnerability may also arise in other safeguarding contexts. Prevent concerns should therefore be considered alongside wider safeguarding responsibilities and addressed through a coordinated and person-centred approach.

Support will be offered in a way that is proportionate, confidential and respectful of the individual's rights and circumstances.

6. Online Safety

The internet plays a significant role in radicalisation and the dissemination of extremist material.

The College will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of students and staff being exposed to unlawful extremist content through College-managed systems, while supporting legitimate teaching, learning and research.

Appropriate technical measures, including filtering and monitoring where lawful and proportionate, will be used to protect users and reduce the risk of access to terrorist or extremist material.

Where access to restricted material is required for legitimate academic purposes, this will be managed through appropriate approval and oversight arrangements.

The College will also promote digital resilience by encouraging students to think critically about online information, recognise misinformation and report harmful content where appropriate.

7. Faith, Inclusion and Community Engagement

The College is committed to creating an inclusive environment where people of all faiths, beliefs and backgrounds are treated with dignity and respect.

Faith-related activities and facilities should promote inclusion, mutual respect and lawful expression of belief.

The College will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, intimidation, hate crime or behaviour that promotes violence or encourages support for terrorism.

Promoting equality, inclusion and respectful dialogue is an important part of reducing the risk of marginalisation and supporting a safe learning environment for all members of the College community.

8. Student Engagement

The College will work with students to promote awareness of safeguarding, wellbeing, respectful debate and democratic values.

Students will be encouraged to raise concerns about their own wellbeing or that of others and to seek support whenever needed.

The Students' Union and other representative groups will be encouraged to support activities that promote inclusion, respectful discussion and community engagement while recognising the College's statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

9. Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential, multi-agency safeguarding programme established under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Its purpose is to provide early support to individuals who are assessed as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Channel is not a criminal justice process and participation is voluntary. It provides tailored support based on an assessment of an individual's needs and circumstances.

Where appropriate, the College may make a Prevent referral to the police. Following assessment, the individual may be considered for Channel if the statutory threshold is met.

10.Reporting Concerns

Any member of staff who has concerns that an individual may be susceptible to radicalisation should report these without delay using the College's safeguarding procedures.

Concerns should normally be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or nominated safeguarding representative.

The College will assess concerns in a proportionate and evidence-based manner and determine the most appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Providing internal welfare or safeguarding support;
- Seeking advice from Prevent partners;
- Making a Prevent referral where appropriate; or
- Contacting the police immediately where there is an immediate risk to life or public safety.

PREVENT referrals should never replace emergency procedures. Where there is an immediate threat or a criminal offence is suspected, emergency services should be contacted without delay.

Governance and Monitoring

The College will monitor compliance with the Prevent Duty through its safeguarding governance arrangements.

This will include:

- Regular review of the Prevent risk assessment;
- Monitoring Prevent training;
- Review of referrals and safeguarding themes where appropriate;
- Consideration of changes to legislation and national guidance; and
- Periodic review of this policy.

The College will work with relevant external agencies to ensure its arrangements remain effective and proportionate.

11.Related Policies

This section should be read alongside the College's:

- Anti Bullying and Harassment Procedure (Student)
- Anti Modern Slavery Statement
- Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy (Staff)
- Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Mental Health First Aid Procedure
- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- IT Policy

12.Further Information

Further information is available from:

- HM Government: CONTEST – United Kingdom Counter-Terrorism Strategy
- HM Government: Prevent Duty Guidance
- HM Government: The Prevent Duty for Further Education Institutions
- Counter Terrorism Policing: ACT Early
- Department of Education: Educate Against Hate

13.Roles & Responsibilities

Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for the endorsement, approval, implementation and compliance of the College's safeguarding policies and procedures. A member of the Governing Body is appointed as 'The Designated Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection' and can be contacted through the Director of Governance. The designated Governor will:

- Be an active member of the Safeguarding Committee to ensure the College has a Safeguarding Policy (which incorporates child and vulnerable adult protection) and procedures which reflect the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) policy and procedures and are available to all stakeholders upon request.
- Receive appropriate Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) training to level 2 or above.
- Through membership of the Safeguarding Committee undertake an annual review of how duties are discharged and ensure that deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied promptly.

- Ensure that the Governing Body considers the College policy on safeguarding each year; and
- Ensure 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.
- Adhere to the principles contained within the current edition of the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings, including maintaining professional boundaries and avoiding situations where they are alone with learners under the age of 18.

The designated Governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies such as the police and social services, in connection with allegations against the Chief Executive/Principal or the senior staff member with Lead Responsibility. This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries. To assist in these duties, the designated governor shall receive appropriate training.

Governors and Contact with Learners Under 18

Governors have an important role in understanding the learner experience and may, from time to time, engage with students as part of governor visits, quality assurance activities, learner voice exercises, events or other college business. Governors must maintain professional boundaries at all times and comply with the College's safeguarding procedures and Code of Conduct.
Governors should not routinely be left alone with learners under the age of 18 in classrooms, offices, meeting rooms or other areas where they are out of sight or hearing of staff or other adults. Where interaction with individual learners is necessary, it should take place in an open, visible environment and, wherever practicable, with a member of staff present or nearby.

Governors must immediately report any safeguarding concern, disclosure, allegation or observation relating to a learner to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Team in accordance with this policy. Governors are not responsible for investigating safeguarding concerns and should not promise confidentiality to learners.

Governor Training Expectations

All governors will receive safeguarding and child protection training, including Prevent, upon appointment and will be required to undertake mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training on an annual basis thereafter. Governors will receive safeguarding updates and updates to statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Governor Visits Protocol

All governor visits involving interaction with learners must be arranged through appropriate college processes, recorded where required and undertaken in accordance with safeguarding, health and safety and visitor management procedures.

Chief Executive/Principal

The Chief Executive/Principal has overall accountability for safeguarding within the College.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

Is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the College and has lead responsibility for:

- Overseeing the successful implementation of the Policy and Procedures, including the PREVENT duty.
- Dealing with child protection and vulnerable person issues.
- Working with People Management to ensure that the College operates safer recruitment practices in accordance with statutory requirements and in conjunction with the Head of People Management.
- Taking a lead role in liaising and working with Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Safeguarding Adults Boards and other agencies as required. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult.
- Ensuring that the College operates robust procedures for managing safeguarding concerns and allegations in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and the Care Act 2014 and its accompanying Care and Support Statutory Guidance, to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Ensuring that the Department for Education has been contacted if the College or one of its subcontractors is subject to investigation by the local authority or the police.
- Ensuring college protocols are followed following the death of a student.
- Taking the lead for raising awareness of issues relating to the wellbeing and welfare of young people and the promotion of a safe learning environment for the young people learning at the College.
- Taking the lead for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in safeguarding issues and are aware of the College's safeguarding procedures.
- The delivery of the safeguarding procedures.
- Attending, when necessary, case strategy meetings with the designated officer from the relevant local authority in respect of safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring that the College has appropriate resources available for safeguarding.
- Ensuring the college's PREVENT duty is fully implemented.
- Providing supervision, advice and support to the Safeguarding Coordinator and other staff on issues relating to young people and adults at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have received training in young people and adults at risk issues and inter-agency working, as required by the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (PSCPB) and Plymouth Safeguarding Adults Board (PSAB) and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.

Safeguarding Coordinator

The Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible for:

- Receiving, recording and passing on external agencies, where appropriate and following consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, disclosures in accordance with College procedures.
- Liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.
- Providing advice and support to other employees/volunteers on issues related to young people and vulnerable persons.
- Informing parents/carers, where appropriate, and following consultation with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the College's Disclosure to parents/carers Policy.
- Attending training commensurate with the role.
- Keeping themselves up to date with any changes in College policy/procedures or legislative changes.
- Attending College meetings to report on safeguarding matters.
- Conducting Criminal Convictions Reviews liaising with Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.
- Reporting to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility.
- Making an appropriate referral.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to young people and adults at risk.
- Dealing with individual cases, including attending case conferences, supporting any relevant assessment processes and attending review meetings as appropriate.
- Ensuring that a proper record is kept of any young people and adults at risk of referral, (even where that concern does not lead to a referral to another agency or authority).
- Taking a lead role in liaising and working with Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Safeguarding Adults Boards and other agencies as required.
- The operational management of the Safeguarding Officers, including the provision of supervision, support, training, advice and guidance as appropriate.
- Ensuring that the procedures and statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and the Care Act 2014 together with the accompanying Care and Support Statutory Guidance, are implemented consistently and followed at an operational level across the College.
- Liaising and working with other agencies to ensure a 'multi-agency approach' to safeguarding in the College and to contribute to safeguarding in the wider community.

- Liaising with schools that send pupils to the College to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.
- Ensuring that systems are in place for the safe and secure transfer and receipt of confidential safeguarding files, in accordance with relevant local authority requirements
- Managing and liaising with the Virtual School.
- Ensuring an Annual Report is produced and presented to the Governing Body to ensure the effectiveness of the College's safeguarding policy and procedures and enabling the Governing Board to make any recommendations for revisions where appropriate

The Safeguarding Coordinator will have received training in young people and adult issues and inter-agency working, as required by the PSCP, and will receive refresher training every 2 years.

Safeguarding Officers

The Safeguarding Officer will support the Safeguarding Coordinator by:

- Receiving, recording and passing onto external agencies, where appropriate and following consultation with the Safeguarding Coordinator, disclosures in accordance with College procedures.
- Liaising with the Safeguarding Coordinator and Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.
- Providing advice and support to other employees/volunteers on issues related to young people and vulnerable persons.
- Informing parents/carers, where appropriate, and following consultation with the College's Safeguarding Coordinator, in line with the College's Disclosure to parents/carers Policy.
- Attending training commensurate with the role.
- Keeping themselves up to date with any changes in College policy/procedures or legislative changes.
- Attending College meetings to report on safeguarding matters.
- Partake in conducting Criminal Convictions Reviews liaising with the Safeguarding Coordinator and Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

Volunteer Safeguarding Officers

The Volunteer Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Reporting to the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Dealing with and making an appropriate referral.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to young people and adults at risk.
- Responding to a disclosure and listening to young people studying at the College.
- Dealing with individual cases, including attending case conferences, supporting any relevant assessment processes and attending review meetings as appropriate.

- The Volunteer Safeguarding Officers will have received training in young people and adult issues and inter-agency working, as required by the PSCP, and will receive refresher training every 2 years.

All staff are required to read Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and formally confirm that they have understood its content and how it applies to their role and responsibilities. At the beginning of each academic year, all staff are also encouraged to engage in internally delivered safeguarding CPD to refresh their knowledge, strengthen their understanding and ensure they remain up to date with current safeguarding expectations and practice.

A full list of staff with responsibility for safeguarding can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Estates Management Team

The Estates Management Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all contractors satisfy safeguarding requirements under their statutory obligations and provide information to contractor employees.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for issues related to safeguarding the welfare of young persons and vulnerable persons.
- Periodically conduct a review of the college estate in relation to safeguarding staff, students and visitors and report findings to the Executive of Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience / Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All Staff

All staff have a responsibility under the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy to:

- Promote and apply our Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and procedures.
- Raise any safeguarding concern about a student through the safeguarding referral process.
- Raise any safeguarding concerns about another staff member to the DSL or Chief Executive/Principal.
- Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the safeguarding team if they have concerns.
- Raise any concerns regarding safeguarding practices within the College.
- Be aware of and follow their statutory duties as detailed in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026’, ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2023, ‘What to do if you are

worried a child is being abused' 2015, and 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults working with Children and Young People' 2015.

- Wear their College Lanyard and ID badge at all times while on College premises (with the exception of hazardous areas such as workshops).
- Comply with the established Visitor Protocol by ensuring that all visitors sign in at Reception on arrival, wear their Visitor ID badge at all times whilst on College property and sign out on departure.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors, contractors, volunteers and governors who do not undertake regulated activity must not be left unsupervised with learners under the age of 18 and myst comply with all visitor safeguarding arrangements.

14.Summary

The College recognises that the types of abuse and neglect and the specific safeguarding issues detailed in this section do not provide an exhaustive list and is committed to responding to all concerns around students in relation to any form of abuse or welfare concerns, (both online and offline). This includes any form of child-on-child abuse, harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, discriminatory or HBT. Further advice, guidance and support for staff and students about what to do if they have a concern about any safeguarding issue can be obtained from members of the Safeguarding Team, from the Safeguarding site on the College intranet or from the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) website (https://plymouthscb.co.uk/

We recognise that because of the regular contact with young people, college staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse, maltreatment (including bullying and exploitation) or risks to health and development.

The College will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where young people and adults at risk feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account.
- Ensure Children and Adults at risk know that there are adults in the College whom they can approach if they are worried.
- include opportunities in the tutorial curriculum for young people and adults at risk to develop the skills they need to recognise risk and stay safe.
- We will follow the procedures set out by the PSCP, and take account of guidance issued by the Department of Education to:
- Designate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to assume responsibility for all safeguarding matters.
- Ensure we have designated Safeguarding Officers who have received appropriate training and support for this role.

- Ensure that the Governors monitor arrangements for young people and adults at risk and receive a report at least annually from the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Ensure that all staff scheduled to work with 14-18-year-old students and adults at risk will have received the College's safeguarding training prior to involvement with such students.
- Ensure that all staff have received awareness-raising training about young people and adults at risk issues at induction of new staff.
- Ensure that all staff plus new governors have been DBS checked.
- Ensure all members of staff, including volunteers, know the names of the Safeguarding Team and their roles.
- Ensure all staff, partners, visitors, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors, understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse or other safeguarding issues and for referring any concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Promote Prevent and Fundamental British and Community Values to develop student resilience to extremism and radicalisation and preparation for work and life in the modern British Community.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the College and staff for young people and adults at risk by setting out its obligations in the appropriate College publication.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding young people and adults at risk matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about young people and adults at risk, even where there is no need to refer to the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main student file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Develop and then follow procedures to handle allegations against other children and young people.
- Ensure that safer recruitment practices and pre-employment vetting are always followed.

The College recognises that young people and adults who are at risk of harm and/or abuse or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The College may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of these young people. When at college their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The college will endeavour to support the student through:

- The content of the curriculum includes online safety, personal safety, resilience and British values.

- The College ethos which promotes a positive, fair, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring that young people and adults at risk know that certain behaviours are unacceptable but that they personally are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the student such as (but not limited to) Children's Services, Adult Care Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Careers South West.
- Ensuring that when a student on the safeguarding register leaves the College their information is transferred to their new school or college immediately and that the young person's social worker is informed.

15.Implementation

Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns Including Prevent Training

Any member of staff who has knowledge of or a suspicion that a child / vulnerable adult is or has been suffering significant harm must refer their concern to a Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. They must also pass any written notes to the Safeguarding Officers and not retain any written information. All allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. The student must be advised that this information cannot be kept confidential and will be passed on to the designated member of staff in the College in the first instance. (**Appendix 2**).

If a young person or adult at risk tells a member of staff about possible abuse or safeguarding concern staff should:

- Listen carefully and stay calm; do not interview the young individual, let them talk and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the young person is telling you; questions should be kept to the minimum required for clarity, and leading questions must be avoided.
- Reassure the individual that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- Inform the individual that you must pass the information on and only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of whom you will report the matter.
- Note the main points carefully.
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the individual said, did and your questions and any injuries observed if any.
- Pass, by hand, or other secure method of delivery (not email) such detailed notes into the care and control of the Designated Staff Members. The Designated Staff Members shall store the notes in a secure and central location and will use them to assist in the identification of possible patterns of concerns.

- Contact the police or the appropriate local authority service in the event of the risk of significant or immediate harm to the individual.

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves and report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Staff Members.

Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff

The procedures apply to all staff, whether teaching, administrative, management, senior management or support, supply/agency staff as well as to volunteers and contractors. The word 'staff' is used for ease of description. The procedures are to be applied and managed in accordance with Working Together 2023 guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the principal requirements of which are contained herein.

Any allegations against members of staff will be dealt with through the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against other Students

The procedures are applied and managed in accordance with the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the principal requirements of which are contained herein.

Introduction

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others within the college, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and exploitation connected with crime or attempts at radicalisation for violent and non-violent extremism.

An allegation may:

- Be made against another student and refer to their behaviour towards a fellow student or a young person within the College community.
- Be of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- Raise risk factors for other students and young people within the College community.
- Indicate that other students and young people within the College community may have been affected by this student.
- Indicate that young people outside of the College community may be affected by this student.

If a young person may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, social services or the police, as appropriate, should consider what support the young person may need.

Every effort shall be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

The College shall keep clear and comprehensive records of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved and of any actions taken and decisions reached. These shall be kept in accordance with the paragraph below ('Records').

Receiving an allegation from a Young Person

A member of staff who receives an allegation about a student or young person within the College community from another student should follow the guidelines in Section 6 for dealing with disclosure.

The allegation should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Coordinator in line with the College's internal procedures. Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves and report them immediately to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

The Safeguarding Coordinator should contact social services to discuss the case where required. It is possible that social services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this student. The Safeguarding Coordinator will follow through with the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate.

If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim).

It may be appropriate to suspend the student being complained about for a period of time in accordance with the College's Behaviour Management Procedure.

Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough investigation should take place into the matter using the College's Behaviour Management Procedure.

In situations where the College considers a safeguarding risk is present, including a report of sexual violence or harassment, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative supervision plan. The risk assessment shall be led by the Safeguarding Coordinator.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a review with everyone concerned.

Records

It is important that records relating to the concern and any investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written or electronic record of the outcome. The Safeguarding Coordinator shall ensure that records are retained on both students' files.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Information and Records Management Society 'records management toolkit for schools of 2019.

Monitoring Effectiveness

Where an allegation has been made against another student, the Safeguarding Coordinator, together with the Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility, should, after the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the College's practices, procedures and policies. This should occur regardless of whether the case is accepted by social services and/or the police. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff and student induction.

Recruitment And Selection Procedures

The College has safer recruitment and selection procedures which meet the requirements of the existing legislation and associated statutory guidelines. These are regularly reviewed in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- They should apply to all staff, workers and volunteers who may work with young people.
- The post or role should be clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role should be identified.
- Vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- Require documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications.
- Obtain professional references.
- Verify previous employment history.
- Inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure).
- Use a variety of selection techniques (eg qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).
- Agency staff working at the College.
- Recruitment of ex-offenders.
- Reporting of criminal records.
- People banned from working with children.

Records

All paper records handed to or created by the Safeguarding team must be retained securely and remain in confidence. Records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet contained within the office of the Safeguarding Coordinator (K030). This office shall be locked when unattended. Only members of the Safeguarding Team are authorised to gain access to the records.

All electronic information is stored securely on Pro Monitor, which is password protected and only available to relevant staff.

Should records need to be disclosed to another member of the Safeguarding Team or to other authorised (by law) individuals, then such disclosure must take place securely and confidentially (eg Via confidential & encrypted email, hand delivery or postmarked 'Strictly Private and Confidential'). Email is not a secure method of communication and as such can be intercepted and read in the same way as a postcard.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Information and Records Management Society 'records management toolkit for schools' of 2019

Records may only be destroyed by the Safeguarding team and shall be destroyed firstly by shredding before utilising the confidential waste system as provided by the College.

Any breaches of security concerning safeguarding records shall be investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Supporting Documentation Including Safeguarding

Internal

- College Charter
- Induction documentation
- Student Handbook
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Anti Bullying Policy & Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Harassment Policy
- Data protection policy
- Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure
- Mental Health Strategy
- HE Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policy

External

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002 – Section 175
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused 2015
- Information Sharing – Advice for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers 2024
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021

Appendix A - List of College Safeguarding Contacts

Name	Contact Number	Area of support
Steven Forsyth	07483648922	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Louise Core	01752 305865 Ext 5865	Safeguarding Coordinator - all areas
Lindsay Edmonds	07800 810593 Ext 5034	Safeguarding Officer - all areas
Sheryl Jenkins	07971 943034 Ext 5728	Safeguarding Officer - all areas

Appendix B - Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a student

Guide for raising safeguarding concerns about a student, (KCSIE 2026)

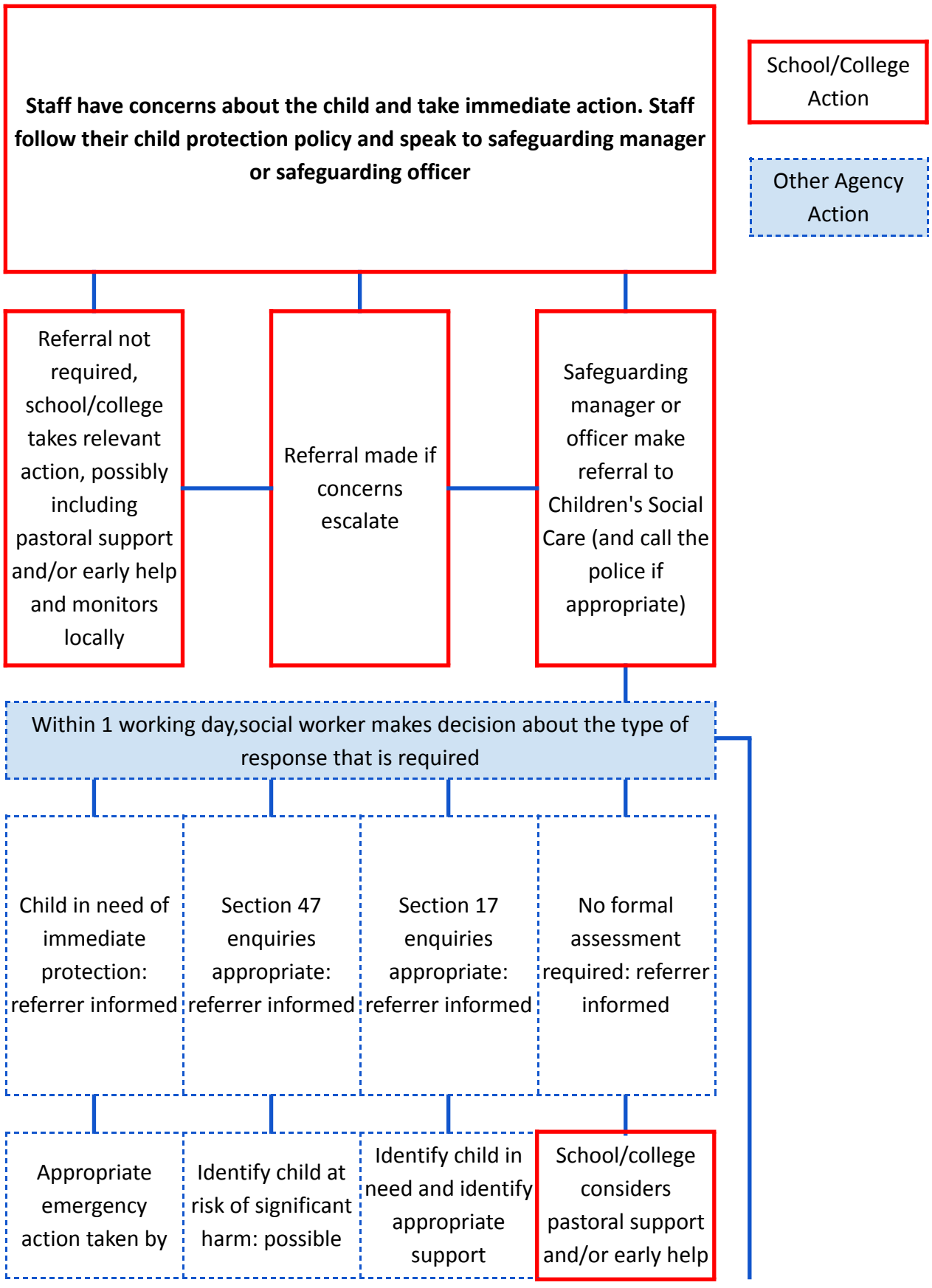
1 In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.

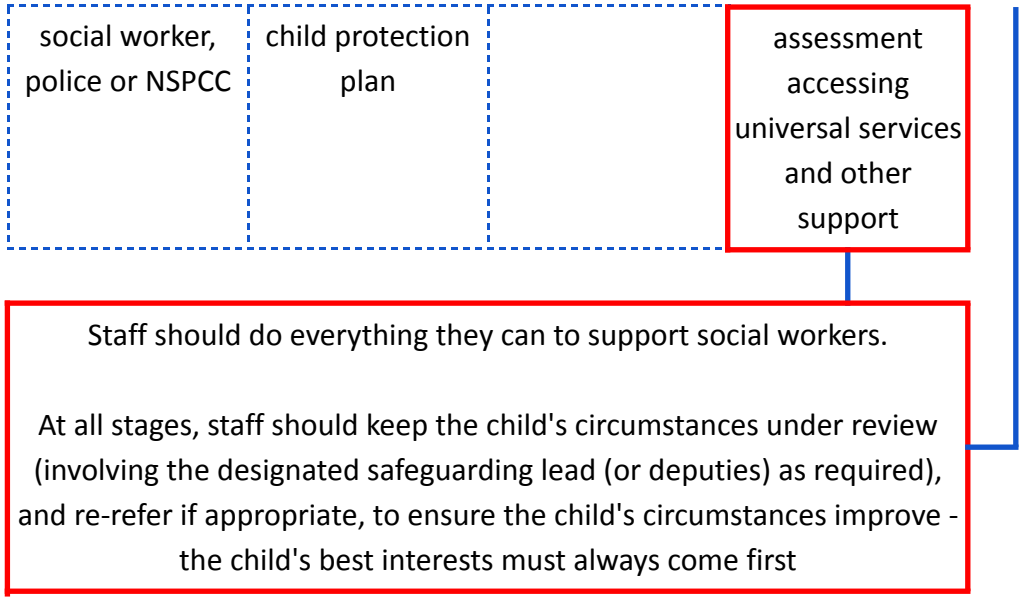
2 Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated Family Help, a family help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the Family Help process.

3 Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. See Working Together to Safeguard Children

4 Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

5 This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO)


Staff have concerns about the child and take immediate action. Staff follow their child protection policy and speak to safeguarding manager or safeguarding officer
School/College Action
Other Agency Action
Referral not required, school/college takes relevant action, possibly including pastoral support and/or early help and monitors locally
Referral made if concerns escalate
Safeguarding manager or officer make referral to Children's Social Care (and call the police if appropriate)
Within 1 working day,social worker makes decision about the type of response that is required
Child in need of immediate protection: referrer informed
Section 47 enquiries appropriate: referrer informed
Section 17 enquiries appropriate: referrer informed
No formal assessment required: referrer informed
Appropriate emergency action taken by
Identify child at risk of significant harm: possible
Identify child in need and identify appropriate support
School/college considers pastoral support and/or early help


social worker, police or NSPCC
child protection plan
assessment accessing universal services and other support
Staff should do everything they can to support social workers.
At all stages, staff should keep the child's circumstances under review (involving the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) as required), and re-refer if appropriate, to ensure the child's circumstances improve - the child's best interests must always come first

Appendix C

This appendix should be read alongside the following statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026) (current edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) (current edition)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

Safeguarding records contain highly sensitive personal information and must be created, maintained, retained, transferred and disposed of securely. Access must be restricted to authorised personnel who have a legitimate safeguarding responsibility and a need to know.

Record description	Personal date	Relevant guidance	Retention period	Disposal
Child Protection / Child Safeguarding Files	Yes	Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition); Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)	Date of Birth + 25 years	Secure confidential destruction
Safeguarding allegations or concerns about a member of staff, including allegations that are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious	Yes	Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition), Part Four – Allegations and concerns about adults working with children; UK GDPR; Data Protection Act 2018	Until the individual's normal retirement age or 10 years from the date of the allegation, whichever is longer, unless a longer retention period is required by law or ongoing legal proceedings	Secure confidential destruction

Child Protection Records

Child protection records must be maintained separately from the main pupil record and held securely with appropriate access controls.

When a child transfers to another school or educational setting before reaching the age of 18, the child protection record must be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil record as soon as possible following confirmation of the new placement. Wherever appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should discuss the child's safeguarding needs directly with the receiving school's DSL to support continuity of safeguarding arrangements.

A record of the transfer should be retained, including:

- the date of transfer;
- the receiving organisation;
- the recipient;
- the method of secure transfer; and
- confirmation that the records were received, where available.

When a child is removed from the roll for Elective Home Education (EHE), safeguarding information should be shared with the Local Authority in accordance with statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and information sharing requirements.

Information Sharing

Information should be shared lawfully, proportionately and securely with relevant safeguarding partners where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Decisions to share information should be recorded, together with the rationale for those decisions, in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Allegations and Concerns About Adults Working with Children

Records relating to allegations and concerns about adults working with children must be managed in accordance with Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Where appropriate, schools should consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Records must:

- be factual, accurate, objective and contemporaneous;
- distinguish clearly between fact, opinion and professional judgement;
- document decisions made and the reasons for those decisions;
- be stored securely with strictly controlled access; and
- be retained in accordance with this retention schedule and any applicable legal requirements.

Where allegations are found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, records should only be retained where required by statutory guidance, legal obligations or to safeguard children. Any retained record must remain confidential and be managed in accordance with data protection legislation and the organisation's records management procedures.

Disposal

At the end of the applicable retention period, safeguarding records must be destroyed using an approved confidential disposal process that ensures the information cannot be reconstructed or recovered. Disposal should be authorised and documented in accordance with the organisation's Records Management Policy.

Appendix D - Understanding and Managing Self-Harm

Introduction

There are many reasons why students try to harm themselves and once they start, it can become a compulsion. This is why it is so important to spot self-harming as soon as possible and do everything you can to help.

Self-harm is common in young people; at least 10% report having self-harmed. It is more common in females than males, especially in early adolescence. Self-harm is much less frequent in younger children and under the age of 11 self-harm is more common in boys than in girls.

Self-harm is an act of survival and not a final act or a cry for attention. It is often a way for students to release overwhelming emotions. It is a way of coping and so whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously, as with repeated self-harm comes a greater risk of attempted suicide.

Self-harm may include overdose (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, burning, pulling air, picking skin, eating disorders, head banging and self-strangulation, although this is not an exhaustive list.

Scope

This document describes the College's approach to self-harm and is intended as guidance for all staff and those in governance.

This document covers self-harm (section 6) and does not cover other issues such as over-eating, food restriction or risk-taking behaviours such as consuming drugs and alcohol.

Aims

This document aims to:

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm.
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors associated with self-harm.
- To provide support to staff dealing with students who self-harm.
- To provide support to students who self-harm, their peers and parents/carers.

Definition of Self-Harm

Self-harm is any self-injurious behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to one's own body, or suicidal thoughts or actions. Examples of self-harm behaviour are:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin
- Swallowing inedible objects
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances
- Burning or scalding

- Hair-pulling
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively

Risk Factors

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a student vulnerable to self-harm:

Individual Factors:

- Depression / anxiety
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skill
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse / misuse
- Having additional needs / SEND
- Adverse Childhood Experiences / trauma

Family Factors:

- Unreasonable expectations being placed on the young person
- Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Poor parental relationships and arguments
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family
- Adverse Child Experiences / trauma

Social Factors:

- Difficulty in making relationships / loneliness
- Being bullied or rejected by peers
- Interest in social networking/websites that focus on self-harm or suicide

Warning Signs

College staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to thoughts of self-injury or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should seek further advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits (eg student may appear overly tired if not sleeping well)
- Increased isolation from friends or family / becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood (eg more aggressive or introverted than usual)

- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in appearance, including clothing (eg wearing long sleeves in a heatwave)

Working to prevent self-harm

Helping children and young people learn healthy and adaptive ways of coping with stress, building resilience and self-esteem helps to promote good mental health for life. The risk of self-harm can be significantly reduced by creating a supportive environment in which healthy relationships are fostered.

City College Plymouth will:

- Support student's social and emotional development
- Teach effective emotional coping skills
- Build a positive college community that encourages children to seek support when they are distressed
- Educate college staff to understand self-harm and what may underlie self-harming behaviour
- Work with families and provide them with information about promoting student's social and emotional learning and understanding self-harm
- Increase resilience through the curriculum and other college-based activities
- Provide activities that enable students to raise their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth

Staff Roles in working with students who self-harm:

Students may choose to confide in a member of college staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. College staff may experience a range of feelings in response to self-harm in a student such as anger, sadness, shock, disbelief, guilt, helplessness, disgust and rejection. However, in order to offer the best possible help to students it is important to try and maintain a supportive and open attitude. A student who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of college staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

Students and staff need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. **If you consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept.** It is important for staff not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a student puts pressure on them to do so.

Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in, or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm, should immediately follow the College's safeguarding referral process.

Following the report, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an assessment of the level of risk and decide on the appropriate course of action.

This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers.
- Contacting the relevant statutory agencies eg children's social care or the police.
- Arranging other professional assistance, eg doctor, nurse, etc.
- Consulting with another agency, eg CAMHS or the Educational Psychology Service.
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor.
- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers.

In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the student is paramount and an adult should remain with the student at all times.

If a student has self-harmed in college a first aider should be called for immediate help and the appropriate action taken, including calling 999 for an ambulance if needed.

Further Considerations

Any meetings with a student, their parents/carers or their peers regarding self-harm should be recorded on Pro Monitor, under the category 'self-harm.' The following details should be included:

- Date and time
- Outline of concerns raised
- Details of the action(s) taken
- Details of anyone else who has been informed
- Notes of supervision or consultation and any risk assessment requirements

It is important to encourage students to let a member of staff know if one of their peers is in trouble, upset or showing signs of self-harming. Friends can worry about betraying confidence so they need to know that self-harm can be very dangerous and that by seeking help and advice for a friend they are taking responsible action and being a good friend. They should also be aware that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

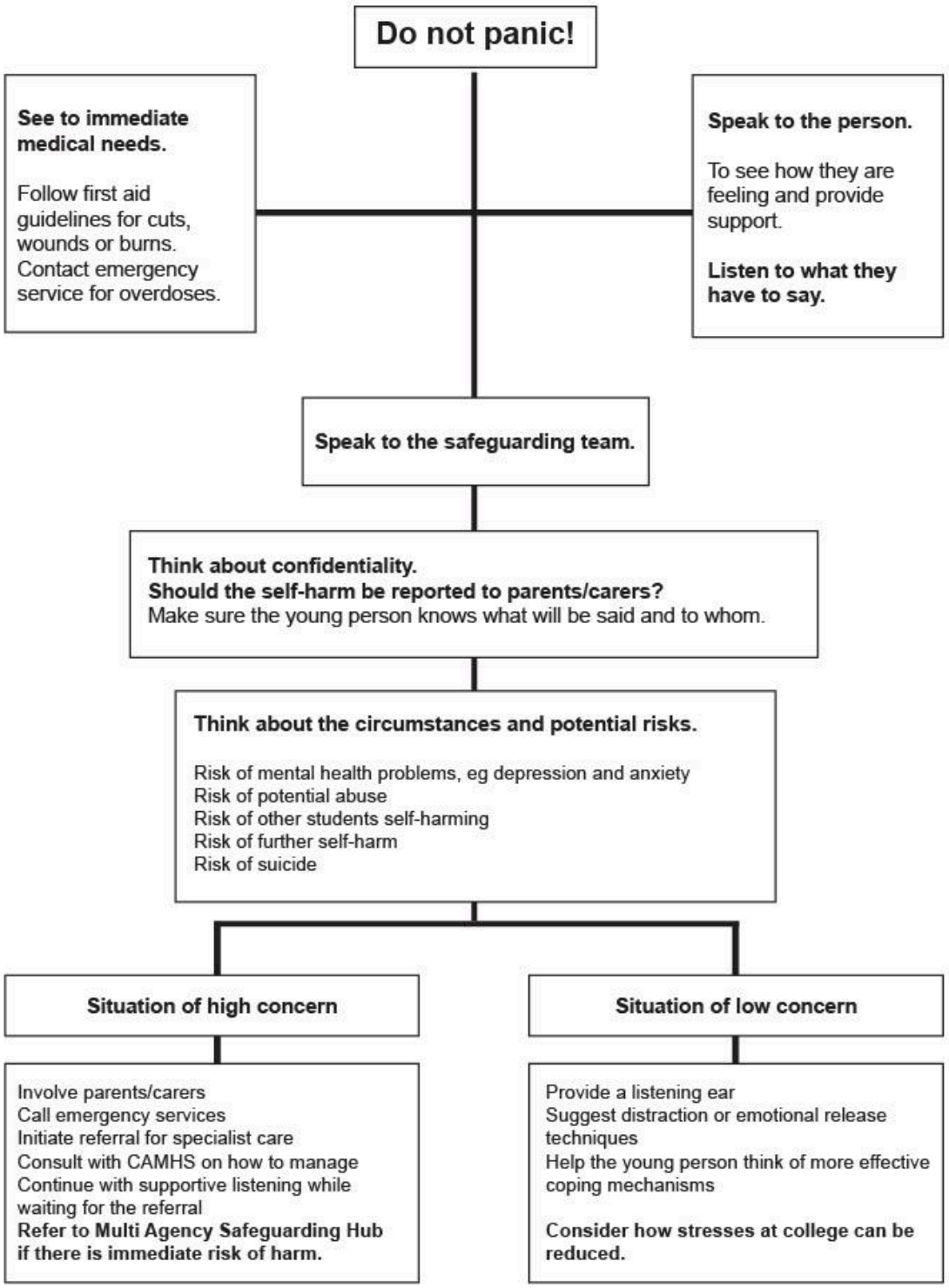
The peer group of a student who self-harms may value the opportunity to talk to a member of staff either individually or in a small group. Any member of staff wishing for further advice on this should consult the Designated Lead for Safeguarding or their Deputy.

When a student is self-harming, it is important to be vigilant in case close contacts with the individual are also self-harming (so called 'contagion'). Occasionally colleges discover that a number of students in the same peer group are harming themselves.

Where a student has been self-harming and the protective factors that have been put in place are outweighed by the remaining risks, advice should be sought from the children's social services to determine whether or not the threshold for formal child protection intervention has been met.

Appendix E: Self-harm at college and what to do

(to be used in conjunction with the safeguarding policy)



Appendix F: Things to consider when talking to students about self-harm

How to approach the topic of self-harm

You may be the first person to notice that a student has been self-harming. This can be distressing and it can be hard to know what to do. It is important that you don't ignore signs of self-harm. If you suspect self-harm, let the student know that you have noticed a difference in their behaviour and be open about your concerns in an empathetic and caring manner. Students will respond best if your action is calm, non-judgmental and understanding.

Start with sharing your concerns about their wellbeing and encouraging them to open up, such as by saying:

'I have noticed that [then state the changes you have observed in their behaviour, e.g. becoming withdrawn or irritable or angry] and I am wondering if maybe things are difficult for you at the moment?'

If you have explicit concerns around self-harm move on to more specific questions about self-harm, such as:

'I have also noticed that you have [voice your observations, e.g. some scars or have been covering up] . I know that sometimes this can be a sign that someone is harming themselves. Can I ask if you have self-harmed?'

Helpful questions and statements

To understand why a student may be self-harming it is important to have an open conversation about their reasons. It can be helpful to convey that you understand some of the functions of self-harm to encourage the young person to open up. For example, you could say:

'I wonder what are the sorts of things that make you feel like harming yourself?'

If this does not lead to the student opening up, you could add something like:

'Sometimes people self-harm as a way of managing strong and difficult feelings or emotions. I am wondering if that might be why you hurt yourself?'

or

'I know that people self-harm for many different reasons and that they often experience a range of different emotions. I wonder if you are able to help me understand what leads you to self-harm?'

It is best to be direct

Some people are concerned about talking about self-harm. However, research shows that asking about self-harm or suicidal thoughts does not put the idea into people's heads. Ask direct questions but in a kind and empathetic manner. Ensure that what you say, your facial expression and your body language all convey compassion, non-judgement and empathy.

Language to avoid

Sometimes negative terms are used for self-harm, such as ‘attention-seeking’ or ‘manipulative’. This language is unhelpful and may make it harder for a person to open up or ask for help. Some people do need attention but are not able to find a positive way to get it. Creating a supportive and non-judgemental atmosphere will make it easier for a person to seek help.

Appendix G - Definitions of Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect (Safeguarding)

Abuse

Abuse is any action or failure to act that causes harm, distress, or violates a person's human or civil rights. It can be a single incident or repeated over time, and it may be intentional or unintentional. Abuse can occur in any setting, including a person's home, care home, hospital, workplace, or community.

Common types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse – Hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.
- Emotional/Psychological abuse – Threats, intimidation, humiliation, bullying, controlling behaviour, isolation.
- Sexual abuse – Any unwanted or non-consensual sexual activity, harassment, or exploitation.
- Financial or Material abuse – Theft, fraud, pressure over money, misuse of benefits or property.
- Domestic abuse – Controlling, coercive, threatening, violent, or abusive behaviour between family members or partners.
- Discriminatory abuse – Harassment or unfair treatment based on age, disability, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.
- Organisational abuse – Poor care practices or neglect within an organisation or care setting.
- Modern slavery – Human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, or exploitation.
- Online/Digital abuse – Cyberbullying, online scams, harassment, or exploitation through digital technology.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, medical, or social needs, resulting in harm or a risk of harm. It may be deliberate or caused by a lack of knowledge, skills, or resources.

Examples include:

- Not providing adequate food or drink.
- Failing to provide appropriate clothing or shelter.
- Ignoring medical or personal care needs.
- Leaving someone in unsafe or unhygienic conditions.
- Failing to protect someone from harm or abuse.

Self-Neglect

Self-neglect occurs when a person is unable or unwilling to care for their own basic needs, health, hygiene, or living environment, putting themselves at risk of serious harm.

Examples include:

- Poor personal hygiene.
- Refusing necessary medical treatment or medication.
- Malnutrition or dehydration.
- Living in unsafe or unsanitary conditions.
- Hoarding to the extent that it creates health or safety risks.
- Failing to maintain personal safety or seek help when needed.

Key Difference

- Abuse involves harm caused by another person (or organisation).
- Neglect is the failure of someone responsible for providing care or support to meet a person's needs.
- Self-neglect occurs when an individual fails to care for their own needs, placing themselves at risk, even when no one else is directly responsible.

These definitions align with safeguarding principles used in health and social care, including guidance under the Care Act 2014 in England.

Appendix H - Briefing Note: Suicide in Children and Young People

OFFICIAL

Office of the Director of Public Health

Briefing Note: Suicide in Children and Young People

1. Purpose

This briefing offers a summary of findings and recommendations from the 2021 National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) Programme report, *"Suicide in Children and Young People"* (1). The focus is on the findings most relevant to schools, with specific recommendations on how school policies can support suicide prevention outlined in the final section.

2. Summary of Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Suicide-Safer Policy – It is recommended that all secondary schools implement a suicide-safer policy. This addresses many of the report's education-focused recommendations and offers an overarching policy to which other school policies (such as bullying and exclusion) can direct when there are concerns about a child or young person.
- Recommendation 2: Anti-Bullying Policy – It is recommended that anti-bullying policies explicitly acknowledge bullying as a risk factor for suicide, directing staff to the suicide-safer policy when concerns arise.
- Recommendation 3: Exclusion Policy – It is recommended that exclusion policies note exclusion as a potential adverse factor associated with suicide, directing staff to the suicide-safer policy when concerns arise. Multi-agency conversations may be valuable if exclusion is being considered.

Please see Section 5 for full details of these recommendations.

3. Background

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in children and young people (2), and the leading cause of death in adolescents aged 15–19 (3). The loss of anyone through suicide is an immense tragedy, with far-reaching and long-lasting effects on families, loved ones, friends, and the wider school and local community.

"Suicide is complex, rarely caused by one thing, and suicide prevention is also complex. We need to understand who is at risk and when, the stresses and settings, and the response of services." (4)

The National Child Mortality Database project explored common characteristics of children and young people who had died by suicide, gathering a depth of information well beyond that of other routinely available data and literature. In the 91 cases reviewed in depth by Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs), 15 adverse factors were identified. Overall, 89% of the children and young people who died experienced at least one of these factors, and 56% had adverse factors in five or more categories.

3.1. Adverse factors which may be associated with or identified in school

- School problems (30%): Experienced one or several issues, including worry/concern about coursework or exams, difficulty engaging with school, or non-attendance. Some had received CAMHS or school-based counselling, and in a few instances, a young person had not met the threshold for mental health service support.

- Bullying (23%): Experienced bullying or cyberbullying, with the majority of reported instances occurring in schools.
- Exclusion (12%): Had been given a fixed-term exclusion, permanent exclusion, or had very low attendance. All exclusions were preceded by a significant decline in behaviour over a short time period.

3.2. Adverse factors which schools may have awareness of and be supporting with

- Household functioning (69%): Experienced difficult, adverse circumstances within their homes, including separation, familial mental or physical ill-health, domestic abuse, or alcohol/substance misuse.
- Loss of key relationships (62%): Experienced a personal loss of key relationships, which included bereavement but extended more widely to loss of friendships/routines, moving home, moving schools, and other close relationship breakdowns. 9% had been experienced bereavement specifically through suicide.
- Mental health (55%): Either had a diagnosed mental health condition or had experienced previous suicidal thoughts or self-harm. Notably, 36% had never been known to mental health services.
- Conflict within key relationships (45%): Experienced conflict in, or been exposed to conflict in, key relationships.
- Problems with service provision (35%): Experienced problems with service provision, such as issues with communication or information sharing between professionals.
- Abuse and neglect (32%): Experienced at least one form of abuse or neglect.
- Social media or internet use (18%): Noted in at least 18% of the deaths reviewed, including suicide-related internet use and, in a smaller percentage, sexting.
- Neurodevelopmental conditions (16%): Present in 16% of the young people, which is higher than the rate found in the general population, adding to existing concerns and wider literature regarding self-harm and suicide risk in this group.
- Sexual orientation (9%): At least 9% of the young people had experienced concerns about sexual orientation, sexual identity, or gender identity.

4. Summary of CDOPs Findings and Report Recommendations

- The CDOPs identified learning points across multiple agencies providing services for children, including health, social care, education, and the police.

4.1.1. Recognition of risk and confidence in talking about suicide

- Importance of recognising social risk factors: Recognising the impact background social factors have on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and maintaining awareness that the accumulation of multiple background risk factors increases vulnerability.
- Professional practice and training needs: A recognized need for targeted training to increase the confidence of professionals so they feel equipped to talk about suicide with children and young people, and know what steps to take if they suspect someone is considering suicide.
- Awareness of protected characteristics: The importance of understanding the challenges—particularly during times of additional stress—that young people may experience

related to cultural and ethnic diversity, sexuality, gender identity, and neurodevelopmental conditions.

4.1.2. Issues with joint working and information sharing

- Challenges between agencies: Hurdles in joint working and information sharing between agencies (specifically police, schools, and health services) limited meaningful multi-agency dialogue.
- School transitions: Moving schools was sometimes associated with gaps in a child's history if the new school did not receive all necessary safeguarding and historical information.
- Parental communication: Incidences of poor or disrupted information sharing with parents and carers.

4.1.3. Need for clear policies on bullying in schools and colleges

While school and friendships act as a protective factor for many, others experience bullying, which was frequently associated with other adverse factors like friendship breakdowns. Documented policy gaps included:

- When and how to escalate concerns about a young person.
- Under what circumstances a safeguarding referral should be made.
- Under what circumstances multi-agency meetings should be convened to discuss a vulnerable young person.

4.1.4. Need for revised guidance around use of exclusion

Exclusion was identified as an adverse factor associated with suicide due to the risk of fracturing relationships with universal support services.

- This risk must be factored into decisions being made about a young person’s future.
- If considering exclusion, schools should initiate multi-agency engagement to discuss potential alternative solutions.

4.1.5. Accessibility of mental health support

- A clear need for safe, accessible spaces for young people to talk about their mental health, alongside efforts to increase awareness of how to access support.
- Improvements needed in referral pathways, clearer guidance for GPs on how to respond if a young person refuses support, and heightened awareness around the transition between child and adult services as a period of elevated risk.

5. Recommendations for Practice: Suicide Prevention in School Policies

Several suggestions from the NCMD report should be integrated directly into school policies, supported by clear guidance on risk assessment and the escalation of concerns. The following recommendations are made to schools in Plymouth to support best practice:

Recommendation 1: Suicide-Safer Policy

It is recommended that all secondary schools implement a suicide-safer policy. This overarching policy addresses the majority of education recommendations in the report and serves as a primary reference point for related policies (e.g., bullying and exclusion).

This policy should include:

- Information regarding staff training on the potential impact of significant life events, guidance on identifying risk, clear routes of escalation, and available wider support systems.
- Actionable steps to take when concerned about a young person or when a young person has shared thoughts of suicide, including clear internal escalation pathways and thresholds for multi-agency meetings.
- Detailed postvention procedures to support the wider school community when an individual is suspected to have taken their own life.
- *Resources:* Templates are available via Papyrus, and collaborative links can be made with local school groups (e.g., WeST) who have already developed and implemented this policy.

5.1. Recommendation 2: Anti-Bullying Policy

It is recommended that all schools possess an anti-bullying policy that explicitly acknowledges bullying as a risk factor for suicide.

- The policy should prompt staff to consider wider risk factors, mental health issues, and previous suicidal ideation in the individual experiencing bullying.
- It should direct staff directly to the suicide-safer policy to enable appropriate assessment, support, and escalation.
- *Resources:* Support with policy development is available through the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the NSPCC.

5.2. Recommendation 3: Exclusion Policy

It is recommended that all schools maintain an exclusion policy that acknowledges exclusion as a potential adverse factor associated with suicide.

- The policy should prompt consideration of wider risk factors, underlying mental health issues, and previous suicidal ideation in the student being considered for exclusion.
- It should seamlessly direct staff to the suicide-safer policy framework for appropriate assessment and support.
- When exclusion is being considered, schools should bring in multi-agency support to discuss possible alternatives.
- Where no reasonable alternative to exclusion exists, schools must work with wider system partners to ensure support remains consistent, and that information is shared comprehensively between teams and new education settings.

6. Resources

Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Self Harm and Suicide Prevention – Plymouth

Safeguarding Children Partnership – includes guidance, links to resources, training

Papyrus Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide

Multi-agency Team

Children's Services integrated 'front door' Professionals - how to contact us if you are working with a child | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK

Anti-Bullying Policies

Anti-bullying Alliance Anti-bullying policies
NSPCC Protecting children from bullying and cyberbullying | NSPCC Learning

7. References

1. National Child Mortality Database (NCMD). *Suicide in Children and Young People: National Child Mortality Database Programme Thematic Report.* NCMD, 2021.
2. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. *State of Child Health.* London: RCPCH, 2020.
3. King's Fund. *What is the state of children's health in England?* King's Fund, 2025.
4. Appleby, Louis. *Foreword: Suicide in Children and Young People National Child Mortality Database Programme Thematic Report.* NCMD, 2021.

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Appendix I – Useful resources

Information and support for children and young people:

- Childline: 0800 1111
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Samaritans: www.samaritans.org 116 123
- Harmless: www.harmless.org.uk

Resources for Schools/Colleges

- Building suicide-safer schools and colleges: a guide for teachers and staff
- Young people who self-harm. A guide for school staff

Resources for Parents

- Coping with self-harm: a guide for parents and carers.
- Healthtalk.org modules on parents' experiences of self-harm
- No Harm Done (information for school staff and parents)
- The Parent's Guide to Self-harm. (By Jane Smith, Oxford: Lion Hudson)

Appendix J - Responding to Low-level Concerns

Sharing Low-level Concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns Empowering staff to self-refer Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to Low-level Concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Head of People Management will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses. The Head of People Management will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the college's code of conduct.

The Head of People Management/ relevant ELT Member will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance

REPORTING LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

Reporting Low-Level Concerns

