West Herts College
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

(Including Child Protection and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults)
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1. General Policy Statement
West Herts College has a statutory duty to ensure that the College functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young and vulnerable people receiving education and training at the College. It recognises its role, along with other local services, in facilitating the well-being of children, young and vulnerable people while providing a safe environment to learn in.

This policy and procedures have been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Education and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (HSCB) and other relevant bodies. This policy applies to all staff, governors, and external organisations or individuals including contractors working within the college environment or on behalf of the college. The word “staff” is used for ease of description.

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, West Herts College will act in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- The Children and Young Person Act 2008
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Keeping children safe in education - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2013)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE 2012)

West Herts College is committed to ensuring that it:

- Provides a safe environment for all of its students to learn in
- Identifies children and young or vulnerable people who are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, and are protected from maltreatment. Takes appropriate action to help ensure that such children and young or vulnerable people are kept safe, both at home, at the College and online.
- Will refer concerns that a child or young or vulnerable person might be at risk of significant harm to Social Services or an appropriate agency.
- Raises awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young or vulnerable people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young or vulnerable people learning within the College
- Staff, leaders and managers understand the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet to bully, groom or abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults and support them in learning how to keep themselves safe.
- Aids the identification of children and young or vulnerable people at risk of significant harm, and provide procedures for reporting concerns
- Establish procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff. Recruits staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made and reviews policies and procedures annually. All Staff and Governors will receive safeguarding awareness training and updates.
• Training all staff working with children and young or vulnerable people adequately to 
familiarise them with protection issues and responsibilities and the College procedures 
and policies, attending appropriate refresher training at least every 3 years.

• Has a senior member of the College management team with lead responsibility for 
protection issues. He/she will be supported by a designated safeguarding team.

2. Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding

The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding students and staff rests with the highest level of 
management. However, responsibilities are delegated throughout all levels of the organisation, 
identifying individuals with particular responsibilities for safeguarding.

It is important that everyone is aware of the legal responsibilities and works together to maintain 
high standards with regards to safeguarding. Everyone must know what lines of communication 
and levels of responsibility exist to ensure that all Safeguarding, safety, health and environment 
matters are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

This policy is supported by other policies, procedures and guidelines which have been identified 
as necessary to protect the safety and health of employees, learners and other people who may 
attend the College campuses, including safeguarding all who learn or work or visit all facilities. 
It applies to all West Herts College employees and Students and covers all locations where they 
learn or work.

The Designated Senior Person (DSP) with lead responsibility for safeguarding issues is:

Emma Doree Director of Student Experience

This person is a senior member of the College management team and has a key duty to take 
lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of 
children and young or vulnerable people, and the promotion of a safe environment for students 
within the College.

The DSP has received training in child and young or vulnerable learner protection issues and 
inter-agency working, as required by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board HSCB and 
children’s services ) and will receive appropriate refresher training and or updates every 2 years. 
The DSP should keep up to date with developments in all relevant protection issues.

The designated senior person is responsible for:

• Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant 
investigating agencies
• Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child and young or 
vulnerable people’s protection
• Maintaining a proper record of any protection referral, complaint or concern (even 
where that concern does not lead to a referral)
• Ensuring that parents of children and young or vulnerable people within the College 
are aware of the College’s protection policy
• Ensuring the Principal and Chief Executive and Marketing Directorate are briefed of 
any relevant Safeguarding incident or issues that arise.
- Liaising with local authorities, Children’s and adult services, HSCB, and other appropriate agencies
- Liaising with local schools DSP’s if a Safeguarding concern is raised in relation to a HeadStart student (14-16).
- Liaising with external safeguarding and specialist agencies over suspected cases of abuse and contributing to the inter-agency strategy discussions.
- Providing guidance to parents, students and staff about how to obtain suitable support relating to safeguarding issues and how to access the policy.
- Liaising with secondary schools which send students to the College to ensure that appropriate arrangements in place for students before they start.
- Liaising with employers and training organisations that receive children or young or vulnerable people from the College on long term placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place.
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in protection issues and are aware of the College protection procedures. The DSP will provide an annual report to the governing body of the College setting out how the College has discharged its duties. She is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy identified by the HSCB (or other external agencies) to the governing body at the earliest opportunity.

**Designated Staff Members**

Other designated members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding issues are Karen Chase, Lisa Corns, Gillian Short, Annette Field and Dean Renphrey.

These designated staff members:

- Report to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility
- Will know how to make an appropriate referral after discussion with DSP or CLG member of safeguarding team prior to referral.
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to safeguarding
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to children and young or vulnerable people studying at the College
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the HSCB, and will receive relevant refresher training at least every 2 years

**The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults within the College. A Designated Safeguarding
Governor is responsible for liaising with the Principal and Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility over matters regarding protection, including:

- Ensuring that the College has procedures and policies which are consistent with the local Safeguarding Board guidance and that they comply with all their duties under current legislation. They must also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the college are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Ensuring that the Governing Body considers the College policy on protection each year
- Ensuring that each year the Governing Body is informed of how the College and its staff have complied with the policy, and the training that the staff have undertaken.
- To assist in these duties, the Designated Governor shall receive appropriate training.
- To monitor the college’s performance against this policy and relevant legislation the Designated Governor will meet termly with the Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility, and the Clerk to the Corporation will attend to record the meetings. In line with the procedures set out for staff suspension and disciplinary matters, the Chair, the Principal, staff and student governors are not eligible to be nominated as Designated Governors.

3. Procedures for dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse and Reporting Concerns:

(Responsibility of All West Herts College staff)

If any member of staff has a concern of a safeguarding or child protection nature about a student they have a responsibility to share this information and inform a member of the safeguarding team.

Information should be reported on the same day on a Child protection/ vulnerable adult concern form. The account must be clear, precise and a factual account of observations made.

The DSP will then decide whether the concerns require referral to any external services/ agencies.

Dealing with a discloser

If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse the following guidance should be followed:

- Listen carefully to what is being said without displaying shock. Do not interview the child or person concerned; listen only asking questions when necessary to clarify in order to be sure that you understand what they are telling you.
- Allow the person to speak freely ensuring you do not put words into the child or person’s mouth.
- Reassure them that by telling you, they have done the right thing. Do not promise to keep what they tell you confidential.
- Explain to them that you may have to pass the information on to a member of the safeguarding team, but that only those that need to know about it will be told.
• Complete the Child and Vulnerable Adult protection concern form found on Ishare. Add as much detail as possible using the students own words.

• Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child or person said, did and a full account of your conversation, including anything else that concerns your staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the Designated Senior Person or, a member of the Safeguarding team.

• The Child and Vulnerable Adult protection concern form must be handed to one of the safeguarding team in person, it must not be emailed or put in the post.

• When appropriate the Safeguarding team will undertake any required discussions and communication with parents and carers

• When a concern is made regarding a Head Start student a member of the Safeguarding team will liaise with the relevant school DSP.

Support

If you wish to discuss concerns or issues that might arise from having a student disclose a safeguarding concern to you support and advice is available to you from the Safeguarding team and Human Resources.

Recognising abuse and neglect

Types of abuse and neglect

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their 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 them 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 them. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing them 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 or vulnerable adult, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are 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 or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children or a vulnerable adult to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child, young person or or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy 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 or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Other Specific safeguarding issues

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. The Colleges can access broad government guidance on the issues listed via the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website

(Definitions ARE taken from Keeping children safe in education - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges April 2014)

4. Receiving an Allegation about a member of staff

A safeguarding allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff may have:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child/ vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates she/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children and vulnerable adults.

Any member of staff who receives an allegation of a safeguarding nature about another member of staff should follow the procedures for dealing with a concern and then report the concern immediately to the Designated Senior Person for safeguarding or in their absence the Deputy Principal.

5. Responsibilities of Human Resources and Designated Senior Person with regards to Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff.

The College recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind, and that investigations are thorough and dealt with quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The College has a duty of care to their employees and will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended.

In the event an allegation of a safeguarding nature is made against a member of staff it must be reported immediately to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding who will seek the advice of the Deputy Principal.
Any necessary disciplinary action or investigation will be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

The DSP and Deputy Principal will notify the Principal, unless the Principal is the person against whom the allegation is made. In which case the report, should be made to the Senior staff member with Lead Responsibility for safeguarding who will take appropriate advice and inform the Chair of Corporation where/when necessary.

**Initial Assessment to be carried out by the Designated Senior Person**

The Designated Senior Person should make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the Deputy Principal. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child or person has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported within 24 hours to the HSCB, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other appropriate supporting agencies where appropriate.

Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, ensuring they are signed and dated. The written details should be countersigned and dated by the Principal (or designated person). Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

It is important that the designated senior person does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is to be used to support the decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

6. **Enquiries and Investigations with regards to staff**

Child or young or vulnerable adult protection enquiries by social services or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the College. The College may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The child protection agencies, including the police, have no power to direct the College to act in a particular way; however, the College should assist the agencies with their enquiries.

The College shall hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries will conform with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

Where an allegation of a safeguarding nature has been made against a member of staff, the Deputy Principal and DSP will oversee the investigation jointly and at the conclusion of the investigation or any disciplinary action, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the College’s procedures/policies and if there are any matters arising which should be drawn to the attention of the HSCB.

If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the DSP should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. The DSP is responsible for ensuring that the College gives every assistance with the agency’s enquiries. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. Designated person or Deputy Principal shall advise the member of staff that he/she should consult with a representative, for example, a trade union.

Subject to any conditions set by the police or other investigating agency, the designated person will:
• Inform the child/person or parent/carer making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

• Ensure that the parents/carers of a child/vulnerable adult making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve.

• Inform the member of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

• Where appropriate inform the Chair of Governors and/or a designated governor of the outcome of the investigation.

• Keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation. Follow latest advice/ Guidance from the Department of Education regarding managing allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff.

7. Monitoring Effectiveness

Where a child protection/ safeguarding allegation has been made against a member of staff, the Deputy Principal together with the senior staff member with lead responsibility should, at the conclusion of 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 procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of the HSCB. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

8. Related policies and procedures:

   Safeguarding Incident Protocols
   Safeguarding Emergency Service Protocols
   Safeguarding Criminal Convictions Procedure
   Recruitment Policy and Procedures
   Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
   Managing Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure

The Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and approved by the Corporation at their meeting of 6th June 2007
Amended 20th March 2009
Reviewed by Corporation 6th May 2009
Reviewed and approved by Corporation, 20th January 2010
Reviewed and approved by Corporation, 2nd March 2011
Reviewed and approved by Corporation, 4th July 2012
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Reviewed and approved by Corporation, 8th October 2014