

Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy

St Albans Independent College

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INTRODUCTION

St Albans Independent College fully recognises the responsibility it has under [section 157 of the Education Act 2002](#) to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.

Through their day-to-day contact with students and direct work with families, staff at the College have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to relevant contact within the local council's Children's Social Care provision (referrals will normally be made via the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection).

This policy sets out how the College discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students who are at the College. Our policy applies to all staff, paid and unpaid, working in the College. Staff can often be the first point of disclosure for a student. Concerned parents/carers may also contact the College.

The College will follow the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures.

There are six main elements to our policy:

PREVENTION through the teaching and pastoral support offered to students and the creation and maintenance of a whole College protective ethos

PROCEDURES for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. The definitions of the four categories of abuse are attached (see Appendix A).

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS those who may have been abused or witnessed violence towards others.

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE WORKING WITH STUDENTS

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

1.0 PREVENTION

1.1 We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect students.

1.2 The College will therefore:

1.2.1 Establish and maintain an environment where students feel safe in both the real and the virtual world and are encouraged to talk and are listened to

1.2.2 Ensure students know that there are adults in the College whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate

1.2.3 Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip students with the skills they need to stay safer from abuse both in the real and the virtual world and information about who to turn to for help

1.2.4 Include in the curriculum material which will help students develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to student care and parenting skills

1.2.5 Assist our young people to become more resilient to the messages of violent extremists through creating an environment where all young people learn to understand others, value and appreciate diversity and develop skills to be able to debate and analyse effectively. Through the balanced curriculum, we offer we will help young people learn and explore the values of different faiths and cultures. We are committed to working with the local partnerships working on preventing violent extremism. Staff will be supported should they make any disclosures in this regard and are reminded that they can make a disclosure through the College's Whistleblowing Policy.

1.2.6 Colleges are expected to assess the risk of students being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of how to identify individual students who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting students at risk of radicalisation.

2.0 PROCEDURES

2.1 We will follow the procedures set out in the Hertfordshire Council's Local Safeguarding Students Board Procedures.

2.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Student Protection is Assim Jemal, Principal, who can be contacted by email at assim@stalbanscollege.co.uk and telephone on: 01727 842348. The deputy lead is Elvis Cotena, Principal who can be contacted by email on elvis@stalbanscollege.co.uk or by telephone on: 01727 842348.

2.3 The following members of staff have also received the Designated Person training:

Nicky Logan

The College will:

2.4.1 Ensure there is a designated senior person from the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and student protection in the College at all times. The designated safeguarding lead and any deputies should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training should be updated every two years. In addition, their formal training, knowledge and skills should be updated at regular intervals but at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

2.4.2 Ensure that this training is updated every two years in accordance with government guidance (Keeping Students Safe in Education) or best practice throughout the group.

2.4.3 Recognise the importance of the role of the designated person/s and ensure they have the time, training and support necessary to undertake their duties which for example include, providing advice and support to staff, taking part in inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessment of students in need.

2.4.4 Ensure every member of staff knows who the designated members of staff are and the procedures for passing on concerns from the point of induction. All staff are provided, at induction, with the names and photographs of all the designated trained student protection officers. They are informed during induction and at annual training that any potential student protection concerns are to be brought to the attention of one of the student protection team. Staff are directed to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if the concern relates to a member of staff.

2.4.5 Ensure every member of staff knows what the contingency arrangements are for when the designated members of staff are not available. If a member of staff is unable to locate one of the

Student Protection Team they report to student reception who will arrange immediate contact with one of the designated officers.

2.4.6 Ensure that the designated members of staff take advice from a student protection specialist when managing complex cases from the local Social Care Team. The contact details of the team together with the Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) is detailed in the Useful Contacts, Appendix B).

2.4.8 Ensure every member of staff knows:

- the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any other designated person/s and their role
- how to identify the signs of abuse and neglect
- how to pass on and record concerns about a student
- that they have an individual responsibility to be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and for referring safeguarding and student protection concerns to the Designated Person/s
- that they have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which students can learn
- where to find the Core Inter – Agency Procedures on the Herts LEA website

2.4.9 provide Safeguarding and Student Protection training for **all** staff from the point of their induction which is updated annually so that they are confident about:

- the College's legislative responsibility
- their personal responsibility
- the College's policies and procedures
- the need to be alert to the signs and indicators of possible abuse, including possible student sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation
- the need to record concerns
- how to support and respond to a student who tells of abuse

2.4.10 ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, recognise their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding students and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.

2.4.11 ensure that every member of staff is issued with a copy of Part 1 of the “[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)” statutory guidance document as updated upon induction.

2.4.12 ensure that parents are informed of the responsibility placed on the College and staff in relation to safeguarding and student protection by setting out these duties in the College website via this policy.

2.4.13 ensure that this policy is available publicly either via the College website <https://www.stalbanscollege.co.uk> and by any other any other appropriate means.

2.4.14 ensure that students attendance is monitored regularly with the aim that no student is absent without authorisation, and where the reason for a student’s absence is not known ensure that this is followed up immediately. In particular, where a student is absent due to an extended holiday, or does not return following an extended holiday this be followed up immediately and rigorously. Any concerns in this regard must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2.5 Liaison with Other Agencies

The College will:

2.5.1 Work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all students.

2.5.2 Co-operate pro-actively as required, in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2016](#), with key agencies in their enquiries regarding safeguarding and student protection matters including attendance and providing written reports at student protection conferences and core groups.

2.5.3 Notify the relevant Social Care Unit immediately if:

- it should have to exclude a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan (whether fixed term or permanently);
- there is an unexplained absence of a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan
- there is any change in circumstances to a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.6 Record Keeping

The College will:

2.6.1 Keep clear, detailed, accurate, written records of concerns about students (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately

2.6.2 Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main student file, and in a locked location

2.6.3 Ensure all relevant student protection records are sent to the receiving school or College or establishment when a student moves schools in accordance with the Education Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance.

2.7 Confidentiality and information sharing

2.7.1 Student protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 principles. The Data Protection Act does not prevent College staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a student.

2.7.2 Student protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that students and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parents to see student protection requests, they will refer the request to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Principal.

The College will:

2.7.3 Ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager or Social Care as required. *

2.7.4 Ensure that the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead will only disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis, including Domestic Violence notifications

2.7.5 Make all staff aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard students

2.7.6 Ensure staff are clear with students that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

* **Information sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers** is available from Department of Education. www.education.gov.uk

2.8 Communication with Parents/Carers

The College will:

2.8.1 Ensure that parents/carers are informed of the responsibility placed on the College and staff in relation to safeguarding and student protection by setting out its duties in the College prospectus/website.

2.8.2 Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this action. If the College believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the student or exacerbate the situation, advice will be sought from Social Care. *(Further guidance on this can be found in the Core Inter-Agency Procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board)*

3.0 SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS

3.1 We recognise that abuse or witnessing violence may have an adverse impact on those students which may last into adulthood without appropriate intervention and support.

3.2 This College may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of students at risk. Nevertheless, when at the College their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may become withdrawn.

3.3 We recognise that some vulnerable students may develop abusive behaviours and that these students may need to be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

3.4 We recognise that, statistically, students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. College staff who deal with students with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse.

3.5 The College will support the student through:

3.5.1 Curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation

3.5.2 An ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and safe environment and values the whole community

3.5.3 The College's behaviour policy will support vulnerable students in the College. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the student but does not damage the student's sense of self-worth. The College will ensure that the student knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred

3.5.4 Liaison with other agencies which support the student such as Social Care, Student and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the council's Sexual Behaviour Service or Locality Teams

3.5.5 A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents/carers

3.5.6 Recognition that students living in a home environment where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol abuse or mental health issues are vulnerable and in need of support and protection; they may also be young carers

3.5.7 Monitoring and supporting student's welfare, keeping records and notifying Social Care in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board "Core Inter - Agency Procedures"

3.5.8 When a student who is subject to a student protection plan leaves, information will be transferred to the new school immediately. The relevant contact with social care and any other relevant agencies will also be informed

3.5.9 When a student is missing from education, the College will immediately notify the relevant contact within the Social Care Team/Education Welfare Officer and follow any local procedure's accordingly if a student is subject to a Student Protection Plan or there have been ongoing concerns.

3.6 Substance Misuse and Student Protection

3.6.1 The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not necessarily sufficient to initiate student protection proceedings but the College will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse
- to believe the student's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults
- where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse.

3.7 Students of Substance Misusing Parents/Carers

3.7.1 Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with Significant Harm to students, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

3.7.2 When the College receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a student's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures.

3.7.3 This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the students
- Students exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g. customers or dealers
- The effects of alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour

- Chaotic drug and alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance
- Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency
- Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment
- Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn student

3.8 Domestic Abuse

3.8.1 Where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the students/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships.

3.8.2 Principals should be notified of Domestic Abuse incidents where the police have been called and that involve students and young people on their roll and will take appropriate action to ensure students and young people are kept safe.

3.9 Female Genital Mutilation

3.9.1 It is now mandatory to report all cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make appropriate and timely referrals to Social Care if FGM is suspected. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice. The case will still be referred to Social Care even if it is against the student's wishes.

3.9.2 Female genital mutilation includes procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is a surprisingly common form of abuse in the UK.

3.9.3 FGM is carried out on students between the ages of 0–15, depending on the community in which they live. It is extremely harmful and has short and long term effects on physical and psychological health.

3.9.4 FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, and is illegal in most countries, including the UK.

3.9.5 The College takes these concerns seriously and staff will be made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of FGM. Any indication that FGM is a risk, is imminent, or has already taken place will be dealt with under the safeguarding and student protection procedures outlined in this policy. Particular regard should be given to a student who

has returned from an extended holiday, and this should always be followed up and any concerns reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3.9.6 Where the College believes there is a specific risk due to the community it serves further guidance can be found under Part 1 of the Keeping Students Safe in Education Document.

3.10 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

3.10.1 Child Sexual Exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, drugs, alcohol, gifts or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

3.10.2 Sexual exploitation can take many different forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship to serious organized crime involving gangs and groups.

3.10.3 Exploitation is marked out by an imbalance of power in the relationship and involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation and sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.

3.10.4 It is important to recognize that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of this abuse and may not recognize it as abuse.

3.10.5 Young people who go missing can be at increased risk of sexual exploitation and so procedures are in place to ensure appropriate response to students and young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions.

3.10.6 The College will refer to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document and seek advice from the Social Care Team and/or the LSCB if there is a concern that a young person may be at risk.

3.11 Forced Marriage

3.11.1 A forced marriage is a marriage without the consent of both parties and where pressure or threats are a factor. This is very different to an arranged marriage, which both people will have agreed to. It is a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

3.11.2 Signs of concern could include truancy/absence/ from the College/punctuality concerns, low motivation, self-harm, depression, isolation, attempted suicide, eating disorders, other family members forced to marry or reported missing, family disputes, domestic violence and substance abuse.

3.11.3 Further guidance can be found under Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education Document.

4.0 PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH STUDENTS

4.1 The College will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks on employees are undertaken according to the government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2016) and the group's Pre-employment Check Policy.

4.2 The following members of staff have undertaken Safer Recruitment training:

Assim Jemal.

Safer Recruitment training can be provided face-to-face by the Professional Services HR Department, and such training will only be carried out by a DfE accredited trainer or by a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner approved through the Professional Services HR Department.

5.0 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

5.1 Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff will be reported straight away to the Principal. In cases where the Principal is the subject of an allegation, it will be reported to the Paula Hayden, Child Protection School Liaison Officer, North Herts. (See Concerns, Appendix C.) The College will follow the procedures set out in Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education and will seek the advice of the Professional Services HR Department where any such matter is under consideration.

5.2 The College will consult with the Local Authority Named Senior Officer in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and adhere to the relevant procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and always seek guidance from the Professional Services HR Department.

5.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Principal will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ensuring that all allegations are, wherever possible, reported to the LADO within one working day. Following consultation with the LADO, the Named Senior Officer will advise on all further action to be taken. Please note that the Principal should **not** seek to interview the student/s or members of staff involved until advice has been sought. Doing so may compromise any police interviews that may be necessary.

5.4 The College will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to safeguarding and student protection matters are concluded efficiently and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies (including statutory referrals where required) and included in references where applicable.

5.5 Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that students are protected in these types of cases. Where suspension is being contemplated, advice will be sought from the Professional Services HR Department.

5.6 Consideration must be given to the needs of the student and a recognition that a student may make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. It is, however, rare for a student to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

6.0 MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

6.1 The College will ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with students and parents/carers as advised within the Teacher's Handbook. As part of the Induction process, all staff will receive guidance about how to create appropriate professional boundaries (in both the real and virtual world) with all students, especially those with a disability or who are vulnerable.

6.2 All staff will sign to confirm that they have read a copy of the Teacher's Handbook and Part 1 of the Keeping Students Safe in Education.

6.3 The College will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with students aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of Trust).

6.4 The College will ensure that communication between students and adults, by whatever method, are transparent and take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries and are open to scrutiny.

7.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Physical Intervention and/or the Use of Reasonable Force (*reference – DfE, use of reasonable force – Advice for headteacher/principals, staff and governing bodies*)
- Anti-Bullying
- Racist Incidents
- Health and Safety
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints procedure
- Behaviour

7.1 Use of Mobile Phones Policy

7.1.2 Our policy on use of mobile phones, cameras and sharing of images is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually. It is recognised that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately and therefore the College has developed a policy to outline the required protocol for all staff, students volunteers and parents/carers.

8.0 Students with Special Educational Needs

Some students at St Albans Independent College may have Statements of Special Educational Needs and multi-agency planning and involvement to support integrated care.

We recognise that, statistically, students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. College staff who deal with students with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse.

The College may also have students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or challenging behaviours. The College will support staff to decide appropriate strategies that will reduce anxiety for the individual student and raise self-esteem as part of an overall behaviour support plan agreed with parents/carers.

As part of the PSHE curriculum staff will teach students personal safety skills commensurate with their ability and needs. Students will be taught personal safety skills such as telling and who to tell, good and bad touches and good and bad secrets. The content of lessons will be shared with parents/carers so that these skills can be supported at home.

The College may have students who have communication difficulties and we are aware that they are vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. Instead such students will often exhibit changes in behaviours or signs and indicators of abuse recognised by staff with a good knowledge of the student.

Supervision by senior managers will be vigilant to create a protective ethos around the student.

We promote high standards of practice, including ensuring that disabled students know how to raise concerns, and have access to a range of adults with whom they can communicate.

Appendix A

Four categories of abuse

Physical Abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a student. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a student.

Neglect - persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the student's health or development. It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. It may involve the neglect of or lack of responsiveness to a student's basic emotional needs.

It also includes parents or carers failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Protect a student from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Emotional Abuse - Is the persistent emotional maltreatment so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a student's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a student that they are:

- Worthless
- Unloved
- Inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs

It may include:

- not giving the student opportunities to express their views
- deliberately silencing them
- 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on students including:

- interactions that are beyond the student's developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- preventing participation in normal social interaction

It may involve:

- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing students frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- The exploitation or corruption of students

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment although it may occur alone

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a student or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the student is aware of what is happening.

This may involve:

- physical contact including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex)
- non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- non-contact activities involving:
 - students in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images,
 - students in watching sexual activities
 - or encouraging students to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- grooming a student 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 students.

Appendix B

Useful Contacts

Local Authority Designated Officer Tel: 01992 555420 / 0300 1234 043

Wellbeing Team Hertfordshire 0300 777 0707

Social Care Contact Tel: 0300 1234 040

Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours) Tel: 0330 1234 043

Police Student Abuse Investigation Unit Tel: 01707 354000

Local Safeguarding Students Board –<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Childrens-social-care/Child-protection/Hertfordshire-Safeguarding-Children-Board/Hertfordshire-Safeguarding-Children-Board.aspx>

The member of staff responsible for overseeing and reviewing this policy is Assim Jemal. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Date of policy September 2016.

Date for review 31 July 2017.