



Safeguarding, Protection and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

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Policy

Introduction

- This policy states the responsibilities of Wirral Met College in relation to the safeguarding, protection and promoting the welfare of students, specifically children, adults at risk and students who are vulnerable due to circumstances.
- Wirral Met College is committed to safeguarding, protection and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk, recognises that it is everyone's responsibility and therefore expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Wirral Met aims to create a culture of vigilance. All staff should make sure that any decisions about students are made **in the best interests of the child**.
- Informed by statutory guidance and recommendations, this document incorporates:

Intent: creating a safe environment for students to aspire to and achieve their goals.

Implementation: raise awareness of issues with staff through ongoing training and reporting; responding to need and ensuring appropriate intervention is in place by working with local support and statutory agencies; learning through experience and supervision.

Impact: student retain their place in education, achieve their qualification and return to continue their education or progress to new opportunities. Section 6 outlines some impact measures.

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) (WTSC23) as:
 - 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 to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

- Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in WTSC23 as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.
- The 6 Principles of Adult Safeguarding set out in the Care Act 2014 that underpin safeguarding adults are:
 - Empowerment: People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
 - Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need
 - Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.
 - Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
 - Partnership: Services offer local solutions through working closely with their communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
 - Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Definitions

Children are students who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) define a child or young person with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) as anyone from birth to 25 years old who has:

- A learning difficulty that is significantly greater than most others of the same age, and/or
- A disability that prevents or hinders them from using facilities generally provided for their age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions
- An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone over 18 'who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care needs - is unable to protect themselves'. (Care Act 2014).
- A vulnerable student is a student who, due to their circumstances, may require safeguarding arrangements to be implemented e.g.. domestic/relationship abuse, under 18 and have caring responsibilities, care experienced, under 18 and estranged from family, young parent or young mum to be, student involved in offending behaviour, LGBT, students with learning difficulties/disabilities, unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The term student will be used, for ease, throughout this policy and procedure to cover the definitions outlined above.

- This policy applies to all students and staff in the College.

Policy Statement

- The Board of Governors is committed to and will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of ensuring that Wirral Met College:
 - provides a safe environment for students in which to learn.
 - identifies students who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm and follows child/ adult at risk procedures for reporting concerns.
 - identifies students under 18 who are in need of early help/support from other agencies to ensure their welfare and takes appropriate action.
 - takes appropriate action to promote and support the safety and welfare of students, at home, at College, in the community, online and in the work place.
 - Follows established procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
 - ensures the safe recruitment of staff in compliance with appropriate legislation.
- In developing its policies and procedures, the College will take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership, Wirral Safeguarding Adults Board and other relevant agencies, bodies and groups.
- All staff, including governors, agency staff and substantial contractors (such as Caterlink) will receive training to familiarise themselves with safeguarding and protection issues, their responsibilities and Wirral Met College policies and procedures which will be regularly updated. In addition, to provide staff with knowledge and skills to ensure effective safeguarding of children and adults at risk, safeguarding e-bulletins/notifications will be disseminated through email and staff meetings.
- The Be Safe Information Portal on the Virtual Campus is also in place and maintained and provides up to date information and links to external sources of support and information.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be nominated as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection issues. They will be assisted by the College Safeguarding Manager (CSM) and other managers, who have also received the appropriate training and are authorised to act on behalf of Wirral Met College.
- DSL, CSM and other Designated Managers will undertake higher level training to enable them to give advice and guidance, make decisions about safeguarding and

protection issues and take appropriate action. Refresher training will take place at least every 2 years.

- The Board of Governors will receive an annual report which will review how safeguarding and protection duties have been discharged in line with statutory guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025).
- Referrals to the Integrated Front Door/Adult Social Care will, as far as is practicable, be made by the College Safeguarding Manager, Assistant Safeguarding Manager/s or another Designated Manager.
- College staff will not have a direct role in investigating safeguarding or protection issues personally, but will work with other agencies as appropriate.

Supporting Students

- The College recognises that students who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. The College may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- The College accepts that the behaviour of a student in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- The College will support all students by:
 - ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning; through the 'Thrive' programme and other curriculum contexts, students are encouraged to talk about feelings and deal assertively with pressures, are listened to and know to whom they can turn for help and advice;
 - ensuring opportunities to teach safeguarding are preventative and include subjects such as healthy relationships; domestic/relationship abuse and support available; substance misuse; knife crime awareness for example
 - providing students with a range of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties; and ensuring that students are taught about safeguarding so that they 'recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it,' supporting students' development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence and encourage the development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
 - ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety, including the safe use of Artificial Intelligence whilst acknowledging the exciting opportunities its use presents to encourage innovation and maximise the benefits for education, enabling students to learn about the four areas of online risk, as follows:
 - **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide,

- anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child on child abuse, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images) and online bullying
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.
- Ensuring effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place on the college network and devices to block harmful content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning. Filtering and monitoring systems will alert appropriate staff to any attempts by students or staff to access inappropriate content, to enable an appropriate response (see Staff and Student ICT Usage Policies for details)
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students;
- ensuring that the curriculum will help students stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to. Support students to become more resilient to inappropriate behaviours towards them, risk taking behaviours and behaviours that they may be coerced into including grooming, sending self-generated indecent imagery and harmful sexualised behaviour’;
- having a Behaviour Support and Student Discipline Policy and Procedure that is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the College, which enables students to know that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under Safeguarding procedures and monitoring students who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support;
- acknowledging the importance of harm outside the home (HOTH), which considers wider environmental factors in a student’s life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare (WTSC23 KCSIE 2025)
- ensuring sexual harassment and sexual violence is not tolerated and students are enabled to raise concerns and feel they will be listened to, taken seriously, supported accordingly and the incident investigated.
- liaising with a range of agencies that support the student such as Health Services, Wirral Social Care (both children and adults), Early Help and Support for families, Children and Young People’s Mental Health Service (CYPMHS) 0-18 Wirral,, Special Educational Support Services, Wirral Youth Justice Service, Prevent Merseyside & Channel Panel and the Educational Psychology Service.

- ensuring that when a student who is the subject of a Child Protection/Child in Need Plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new provider within 2 weeks and that the child's Social Worker is informed that the child has moved;
- acknowledging that a child has care status/experience by the Local Authority, has been subject to either a child protection or child in need plan potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep individuals safe. It is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group;
- applying the Behaviour Support and Student Discipline Policy and Procedure as required and to consider where a student's poor behaviour is directly linked to their disability or learning difficulty;
- applying the Use of Reasonable Force Policy to ensure that if a student's behaviour is putting themselves or others at risk of physical harm or potentially carrying a weapon. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort and with minimal risk of causing harm to the individual.

Working Together or Early Help & Supporting Families

- The College will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help and supporting families, the police, integrated front door, Adult Social Care and Prevent. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- The College will ensure that relevant staff members, mainly the College Safeguarding Manager and Assistant Safeguarding Managers, will participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including initial child protection conferences/reviews, associated core groups, child in need meetings, care planning meetings, child looked after reviews to consider individual children and contribute to associated plans.
- The College will participate in safeguarding practice reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership, including thematic Section 175 audits across the academic year. It will ensure that there is a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, and embed recommendations into practice and compile required actions within agreed timescales.

Legal Framework

This policy and procedure is driven by the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 2004
- The Education Act 2002
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)
- The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn' Law)
- Prevent Duty Guidance: English and Wales (2023)
- The Care Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty

Monitoring and Review

- The implementation of this policy will be reviewed on a termly basis through the safeguarding steering group and an annual basis in the form of a report to the Board of Governors.
- The policy and procedure will be approved on an annual basis by the Board of Governors and ratified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Additional Policies and Procedures

- a. Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
- b. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- c. Storage and handling of Disclosures Policy
- d. Staff Development Policy
- e. Recruitment and Selection Policy
- f. Data Protection Policy
- g. Health, Safety Policy
- h. Student Anti Bullying Policy
- i. ICT Usage Policy – Staff
- j. ICT Usage Policy – Students
- k. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- l. Guidance for Working with Young People and Adults at risk
- m. Students Social Media Guidance
- n. Staff Social Media Guidance
- o. Behaviour Support and Student Discipline Policy and Procedure
- p. Disciplinary Procedure (Staff)
- q. Fitness to Study Policy
- r. Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- s. Substance Misuse Policy
- t. Visitors Policy
- u. Prevent Risk Assessment
- v. Disclosure and Barring Services Policy
- w. IT Security Policy

This Policy and Procedure has been ratified by Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Board, October 2024.

Child/Adult at Risk Protection Procedure

All staff should recognise that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. These additional barriers and challenges can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Staff also need to be aware that children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child on child abuse. Child on child abuse can take many forms. This can include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- requesting or producing self generated sexual images
- initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

More information is provided under Appendix 1.

The College has a Student Anti-Bullying Policy in place to respond to initial child on child abuse. If an incident of child on child abuse has caused or is likely to cause significant harm, this includes physical assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault/violence, the following procedure needs to be instigated.

In all circumstances of student being at risk of or is likely to be at risk of significant harm the following procedures should also be instigated immediately.

For **ALL** types of suspected abuse/allegation this procedure must be instigated.

How to deal with suspected/alleged abuse

- You must take the information seriously and deal with it quickly, with sensitivity and with respect for the student. Appendix 1 provides guidance about categories of abuse we are protecting against and other specific safeguarding issues such as radicalisation & extremism, criminal and sexual exploitation, child on child abuse, domestic abuse (including Honour Based Abuse), sexual violence/harassment etc.

Receive:

- Listen carefully to what is being said and remain calm.
- Do not interview the student. Just let the student talk normally and without interruption.
- Keep questions to a minimum; just clarify what is being said, without pressure, to be sure you understand what the student is telling you.

- Avoid leading questions or comments, do not put words in the student's mouth or finish off sentences. Do not jump to conclusions. Remember the student may have learning difficulties.
- When the student is telling you things, clarify terms that may be open to interpretation such as frequently, sometimes, often, always, never, possibly, probably etc.
- Do not comfort the person physically or ask to see any physical signs, especially if this means moving or removing clothing.
- Don't be judgemental – remember that you are **NOT** investigating the matter

Reassure:

- Reassure the student that by telling you, they have done the right thing and you hear what they are saying
- **DO NOT** promise confidentiality. Students who have sufficient maturity or capacity to consider matters concerning themselves have the same rights to professional confidence and confidentiality as adults, irrespective of their age. This includes the rights to have certain confidences kept from parents/carers. ***The exception to this principle is the issue of safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk.*** You should make it clear to the student that you cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Respond:

- Inform the student that you must pass the information on, but only those that need to know about it will be told.
- Reassure them that they will be kept informed of all developments.

Record:

- Record the details using the student's own words, verbatim if possible, even if this means using unsavoury language or swear words do not sanitise the words.
- Read the information back to them. This will help clarify the situation. This is particularly important to students who find reading difficult.
- You don't have to provide a copy of this record to the student; they can access this through other means at a later time.
- In addition, it is perfectly acceptable for you to include a separate statement of your professional judgement, any changes in behaviour you have witnessed and/or your opinion so long as you make sure these are clearly identified as such.
- You must contact the Safeguarding Manager/Designated Manager immediately, by phone.
- Once you have spoken to the Safeguarding Manager/Designated Manager you must record the information on the Safeguarding Referral Shield on the staff intranet (My Concern). Do not put any safeguarding information on ProMonitor, other than a brief comment indicating that a safeguarding referral has been made but omitting any further detail. -

- Appendix 3 provides further guidance about Do's and Don'ts when dealing with a safeguarding issue.

Designated Managers

The following Managers are Designated Managers and can advise and decide on matters of safeguarding and protection.

Designated Manager	Safeguarding Role	Contact
Lorraine Jones Safeguarding Manager	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection, and matters relating to students, staff and processes.	0151 551 7032 0790 401 6154
Elisha Smith Assistant Safeguarding Manager	Matters relating to students	0151 551 7435 07990592134
Sarah Wilson Assistant Safeguarding Manager	Matters relating to students	0151 551 7035 07852000983
To ensure that advice is available at all times (eg during holiday periods), in the event that the Designated Managers are not available then the following managers can be contacted.		
Ste Bailey Director of Specialist Provision & Support	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7012 07827 983 488
Phil Jones Vice Principal	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7417 07848147403
Chris Carter Vice Principal	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7611
Kevin Williams	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7411
If staff have safeguarding concerns about one of the above managers then the Principal should be contacted immediately.		
If staff have safeguarding concerns about the Principal then the matter should be referred to the College's Chair of Governors		
Jo Henney		

Chair of Governors	Safeguarding and protection concerns relating to the Principal ONLY.	Jo.henney@wearenugent.org
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- The Board of Governors have identified Rev. Debbie Wilkinson as the nominated Governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding .
- In the unlikely event that a Designated Manager is not contactable (i.e. evening time) the Duty Manager is empowered to exercise discretion and judgement in the prevailing circumstances and may make a referral to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) or Police depending on the circumstances. (Follow guidance on the Staff Intranet (Safeguarding, Designated Managers section). You must inform the Safeguarding Manager or a Designated Manager, as soon as possible, on the following day in accordance with this policy and procedure.

Duties of Safeguarding Manager/Designated Managers receiving Record of Suspected/Allegations of abuse

- Where possible, formal referrals will be done through the College Safeguarding Manager or another Designated Manager. In this section the term Designated Manager (DM) is used.
- The designated manager (DM) should request the information is recorded on My Concern as a concern, from the referrer as soon as possible after the initial contact and check that enough detail has been provided for a formal referral if needs be.
- The DM should ascertain whether or not the *student* has sufficient 'capacity' to be able to understand and make decisions about the next steps on their own behalf.
- A link to the Electronic Multi Agency Referral form (E-MARF) (for under 18's), is provided under Designated Managers section on the Safeguarding webpage on the staff intranet.
- In general, the DM should always discuss any concerns the college may have with the student's parents; they need to know why we are concerned about their child. They also need to be aware that the referral is being made and comment as appropriate. **However, if the DM believes that speaking to the student's parents would place them at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation, concerns will not be discussed with parents.**
- If the student does not have the capacity to make decisions the DM may seek further advice from Integrated Front Door/Adult Social Care. Contact details are provided in Designated Managers section on the Safeguarding webpage on the staff intranet.
- If the DM decides that they must refer the disclosure, they should contact either the Integrated Front Door/Adult Social Care (if out of hours the Evening Duty Team) or the Police. The date and time of the contact, the duty officer's name and any case

no./reference should be recorded. The E-MARF should then be completed and submitted. In compiling the E-Marf gather information from the information logged on My Concern and check pro-monitor for any additional useful information ie any additional needs/EHCP etc. Check Pastoral Coach notes on both pro-monitor and in the secure confidential notes. Provide as much information as possible.

- The DM should either act as the communication channel to the student or nominate the manager of the referring member of staff to arrange so. Where any communications with external agencies follow the initial referral, prompt feedback should be provided to the *student*.
- The DM should ensure that all actions taken in relation to the incident are recorded on My Concern.
- In the case where the disclosure or concern is made by a *student* against a member of staff, the DM should follow the procedure outlined in Managing allegations against staff members.
- In the case where the disclosure or concern is made by a *student* against another student (child on child abuse) the DM will need to consider if the Student Anti Bullying Policy and Procedure would be more appropriate in the first instance and perhaps the Behaviour Support and Student Discipline Policy and Procedure or Fitness to Study Policy need to also be instigated and liaise with the appropriate Head of Department. If the incident involves physical assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse/violence, hate crime or places a student at risk of significant harm, advice will be sought from Integrated Front Door and/or the Police if appropriate and will take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved, making associated referrals as required.
- Attendance at Strategy Meetings, Initial Child Protection Conference/review, Core Group Meetings or Child In Need Meetings, Care Planning will be the responsibility of the College Safeguarding Manager or another Designated Manager, who have received training, and are authorised to act on behalf of Wirral Met College.

Record Keeping

- Staff must not retain safeguarding information or record it on pro-monitor. It is very important that all information is secure. The college uses the software platform My Concern to manage its safeguarding records.
- Child Protection records will be kept until the individual's 25th birthday. Adult protection records will be retained for 8 years. Records relating to students with a looked after/care leaver status will be retained for 100 years.
- Under no circumstance should any safeguarding or protection related information be recorded on Pro-Monitor.

Support for Staff

- This policy and procedure is available to all staff via the staff intranet.

- Training is provided at induction, within probationary period and refreshed every three years, with regular e-bulletins and updates.
- Dealing with an allegation of abuse can be particularly distressing. Staff who are affected as such can request support through their Line Manager, Safeguarding Manager or Smart Clinic.
- Specific roles within the college e.g. Mental Health Wellbeing Officers, Counsellors, Safeguarding Manager and Assistant Safeguarding Managers receive regular external supervision sessions

Accessing Early Help and Supporting Families Services(Under 18's) Procedure

Introduction

Sometimes a student may give us cause for concern in matters relating to their welfare that is not a child protection issue. In these instances, your concerns should be discussed with the student and documented using the Safeguarding Referral Shield on the staff intranet (My Concern) software and discussed with the Safeguarding Manager. You must inform the student you are doing this.

Team Around the Family (Multi Agency Support/Level 3)

- On receipt of the concern the Safeguarding Manager will make a decision and take appropriate action and if thresholds are met the College Safeguarding Manager will contact the student/parents to discuss further.
- Completion of the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) and associated assessment tools will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Manager or another appropriate member of staff. The Safeguarding Manager will assume the role of Lead Professional if/where appropriate.
- Attendance at Team Around the Family meetings will be the responsibility of the College Safeguarding Manager as much as is possible or another appropriate member of staff identified.

Team Around the Student (Single Agency/Level 2)

- In cases where the student's needs can be met through internal support mechanisms the Safeguarding Manager will instigate the Team Around the Student processes if appropriate.

Managing Allegations/Concerns against members of staff Procedure

These procedures apply to all staff (other than senior post holders) as well as to volunteers. The word “staff” is used for ease of description. Where the allegation/concern relates to the Principal or a senior post holder, then references to the “Principal” in this section should be replaced by the “Chair of Governors” and the disciplinary procedures for senior post holders used.

Introduction

- Because of their frequent contact with children and adults at risk, staff may have allegations of abuse or impropriety made against them. Wirral Met College recognises that such an allegation could be for a variety of reasons and that the allegation may or may not be true. Section 11 offers guidance on how staff can protect themselves against such allegations.
- Wirral Met College recognises that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual’s reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within Wirral Met College will do so with sensitivity; act in a careful, measured way; maintain an open mind and ensure that any investigation is thorough and not subject to delay.

Receiving an allegation or concern

- Any member of staff who receives an allegation, or has a concern of their own, about the conduct of another member of staff within the context of safeguarding must report it immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Directors, /Vice/Deputy Principal or the Principal) or the Safeguarding Manager.
- The receiving manager will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) . The DSL will make an initial assessment of the allegation/concern, in consultation with the Safeguarding Manager where necessary.
- The DSL will create a concern on the My Concern database, linked to the student/s involved in the allegation. Due to the additional level of sensitivity of the situation, this record will not name the member of staff and will not contain any detail but will instead state ‘Concern raised regarding a staff member. See DSL or Safeguarding Manager for details’.
- The DSL/Safeguarding Manager will create a concern on the My Confide database linked the staff member in the allegation. Actions taken and outcomes will be documented against the My Confide concern.

- See Record Keeping below for more information

Initial Assessment

- The DSL should make an initial assessment of the allegation/concern on the basis of the information received, consulting with the Safeguarding Manager if necessary. The DSL may also consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if advice is required at this stage. Notwithstanding, the LADO **must** be informed if the member of staff is alleged to have met the following threshold:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a student and/or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a student; and/or
 - behaved toward a student or students in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk and/or;
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children and/or adults at risk
 - this last bullet point includes behaviour that may have happened outside of college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk ('transferable risk')
- The initial assessment will need to consider:
 - whether the allegation meets the harms threshold above, or is a 'low level concern' (see below)
 - whether an investigation is required under the college Disciplinary Procedure and, if so, whether the member of staff should be suspended
- If the harms threshold is reached, the DSL or Safeguarding Manager must be informed, and they will determine:
 - Whether the matter should be referred to the police;
 - Whether the matter should be formally referred to the LADO
 - Whether the matter should also be referred to the Integrated Front Door
 - Any other actions necessary under the Safeguarding procedures

Low-level Concerns

- A low-level concern is any concern that a member of staff may have acted in a way that:
 - Is inconsistent with college 'Guidance for safe working practice with young people and adults at risk', including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
 - DOES NOT meet the harms threshold
- Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - Being over-friendly with students
 - Having favourites
 - Taking photographs of students on personal mobile phone or tablet
 - Humiliating a student (*above definitions and examples taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025*)

- Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.
- Any such concerns must still be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (see above) or the Safeguarding Manager
- If the initial assessment of the concern, by the DSL, deems this to be a low-level concern then appropriate and proportionate steps will be taken to look into the matter and, where the concern is deemed to have merit, provide clear, informal guidance and support to the member of staff in question to ensure their future conduct falls within college expectations. More formal disciplinary action would only be necessary if the concern formed part of a wider pattern of concerns regarding the performance or conduct of the staff member in question.
- Low level concerns must still be recorded, in order to enable identification of any potential patterns of risk (see Record Keeping below)
- Low level concerns do not need to be referred to the LADO (although the LADO can still be consulted for advice if required)

Enquiries Investigations and Disciplinary action

- Enquiries led by the LADO or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the College. Wirral Met College may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The safeguarding agencies, including the police, have no power to direct Wirral Met College to act in a particular way; however, Wirral Met College should assist the agencies with their enquiries.
- Wirral Met College shall consider holding in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or LADO investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Wirral Met College would only suspend if it intended to conduct an internal investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.
- If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, Wirral Met College should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made.
- Subject to considerations of confidentiality and/or objections from the police or other investigating agency, Wirral Met College will:
 - inform the *student* and/or parent/carer that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
 - inform the member of staff against whom the allegation/concern was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

- If the allegation is against a member of staff who is employed by an external agency, the employing agency will be notified immediately and be involved in any subsequent processes.
- Any suspension, investigation or disciplinary action taken must follow the relevant college policy.

Referrals to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

- Referrals must be made to the DBS when both of the following conditions have been met:
 - Condition 1: The college withdraws permission for a member of staff to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults, or moves the member of staff to another area of work that isn't regulated activity.
 - (this includes situations where the college would have taken the above action but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left)
 - Condition 2: The college concludes that the member of staff has carried out one of the following:
 - engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;
 - satisfied the harm test in relation to children and / or vulnerable adults. eg there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult still exists, or
 - been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence

Further information regarding relevant conduct, and how to make a referral to DBS, can be found at [Barring referrals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- This referral will be made by the DSL.
- Consideration will also be given as to whether the Teaching Regulation Agency should also be informed.

Allegations without foundation

- Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. The LADO and other agencies may act upon the information.
- Where a false allegation/concern has been identified:
 - the member of staff against whom the allegation was made will be informed orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or safeguarding action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling/support.

- the persons involved in the allegation/concern will be informed of the outcome and the reasons
- a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken will be filed.
- If an allegation were found to be malicious, this would be treated seriously and followed up appropriately according to the individual circumstances

Record Keeping

- All allegations and concerns of a safeguarding nature that relate to staff, including Low Level concerns, must be recorded on the My Confide which can only be accessed by the DSL and Safeguarding Manager.
- The DSL will also create a record on the My Concern database, linked to the student/s involved in the allegation. Due to the additional level of sensitivity of the situation, this record will not name the member of staff and will not contain any detail but will instead state 'Concern raised regarding a staff member. See DSL or Safeguarding Manager for details'.
- It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.
- If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, s/he should be informed about Wirral Met College's statutory duty to inform the Disclosure & Barring Service.
- Details of allegations following an investigation that are found to have been malicious or false should be removed from personnel records, unless the individual gives their consent for retention of the information.
- However, for all other allegations, i.e. substantiated, unfounded and unsubstantiated it is important that the following information is kept on the file of the person accused:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
 - details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
 - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome i.e substantiated, unfounded or unsubstantiated
 - a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by local authority children's social care or the police, and
 - a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

- The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.
- Records of allegations of abuse (which meet the harms threshold) must be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.
- Records of low level concerns must be retained for the duration of the individual's employment at the college.

Monitoring Effectiveness

- Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 Wirral Met College's procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

Protecting yourself from allegations

- All staff should follow the Guidance for Safe Working Practice with Young People and Adults at Risk, which has been written to help ensure the college is a safe environment for all students and staff. All staff will receive mandatory training regarding this guidance.

Whistleblowing and safeguarding

- Concerns regarding the conduct of a member of staff with regard to safeguarding, or regarding safeguarding practices within the College, will be dealt with in accordance with these procedures regardless of whether they fall within the technical definition of 'whistleblowing'
- Staff who raise such concerns are entitled to be informed as to how their concern has been dealt with, insofar as this is possible without breaching any necessary confidentiality.
- Staff may raise such concerns anonymously if they wish, but should note that this may limit the College's ability to investigate the matter or take action.
- Staff who believe their concern has not been dealt with appropriately may raise this within 10 working days of being informed of the outcome with the Principal or, in the event that the concern relates to the Principal, with the Chair of the Board of Governors.

- The aim of this process is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any safeguarding concerns. In most cases individuals should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally (unless otherwise determined by the Designated Safeguarding Lead as part of the above process). However, the independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline and has a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

Risk Management Procedures

Introduction

Where a *student* or potential *student* discloses information which suggests that a potential safeguarding risk needs to be considered or when staff become aware that a *student* may pose a potential safeguarding risk to other *students*, then the Safeguarding Manager, the Head of Department of the appropriate area or other manager identified in this policy, should be informed. The information should also be recorded on the Safeguarding Referral Shield (My Concern) on the staff intranet.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan

- The circumstances of the potential risk will be investigated normally by the Safeguarding Manager or a person nominated by the Safeguarding Manager. If the *student* is deemed to pose a risk then a risk assessment will be undertaken and a risk management plan will be devised and implemented where appropriate.
 - a. All Risk Management plans will be discussed with and authorised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the case of criminal convictions the Head of Department for the area will also be involved.
 - b. Where possible the risk assessment and risk management plan will be agreed between the College and the *student*, if appropriate the parent/carer of the student and any relevant agencies or support services e.g. Social Care, CAMHS, Youth Justice Service, Probation Service, Sexual Offenders Registration Unit.
 - c. The risk management plan may contain conditions which the student must adhere to as a condition of enrolment or continuation of study. Refusal to enrol or a decision to exclude a *student* on the basis of a safeguarding matter should only be on the basis of failure to observe conditions applied, or because the risk assessment process has been unable to establish control measures which can adequately reduce the level of risk. Any decision to refuse enrolment or to exclude must be done within the appropriate College procedures
 - d. Risk Management Plans will be in place for an academic year and will be reviewed on a termly basis or as required/updates.
- That a *student* or potential *student* may declare or disclose circumstances that indicate a potential risk should not prejudice the normal enrolment process on the

basis of academic suitability and selection, or continuation on a course if already undergoing study.

Confidentiality

As for all students, conditions of privacy, confidentiality and data protection should be observed at all times. Involvement of staff should be on a “need to know” basis sufficient to assess and manage the risk(s). All information will be stored securely on the My Concern platform. Under no circumstances should information be recorded on Pro Monitor.

Record Keeping

- The risk assessment and management plan will usually be for no longer than an academic year. It will be recorded and be subject to review when specified in the plan, if/when other information becomes available or termly.
- Staff must not retain safeguarding information or record it on pro-monitor. It is very important that all information is secure. The college uses the software platform My Concern to manage its safeguarding records.
- Safeguarding records will be kept up to the 25th birthday for children and for 8 years for adults and will then be destroyed.

Support for Staff

- This policy and procedure is available to all staff via the staff intranet.
- Training is provided at induction, within probationary period and refreshed every three years, with regular e-bulletins and updates
- Being exposed to information related to offending behaviour can be particularly distressing. Staff who are affected as such can request support through their Line Manager, Safeguarding Manager or Smart Clinic

Procedure for Dealing with the Death of a Student

Introduction

These procedures aim to ensure that support is provided to the immediate family, where appropriate, and to staff and students of the College, where affected. It also aims to provide a set of procedures for staff to follow when dealing with any death of a student. Individuals using this policy should see it as a minimum guide to help them deal with the situation; it should not restrict their actions as each event will be different. Nevertheless, there is a need to observe legalities, and a need to protect the interests of the College in cases where negligence might be alleged.

The Death of a Student on Site or in the Care of College Staff

- On the first discovery or notification of a death on College premises or while a student is in the care of College staff:

- If a body is discovered by any college employee or the discovery is reported to any college employee, the following action must be taken:
 - a) Secure the area and ensure that no one is allowed to enter the area.
 - b) Inform the Principal's office which will inform the Police
 - c) Summon support from the Facilities team to maintain a secure environment
 - d) On no account should the body be touched or moved and no action other than that outlined above should be taken without direction from the Police.
 - e) Record details of who found the body, at what time, details of who was at the scene at time of discovery, and when the deceased was last seen alive (if known).
 - f) The Head of Department or the member of staff in charge of an off-site group should take charge of the immediate incident until the Police arrive.
- The Principal's office will also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take the lead in ensuring all necessary actions in Appendix 4 are taken.

The Death of a Student Outside of College

- Information about a student death may enter the College from a variety of possible sources and arrive on the desk of any member of the academic or support staff. The report of death may come from someone who says they are a relative or friend, or via a telephone call. Obviously, it is important to be confident that the report is true before taking any action. Whether or not the report is true, it would be insensitive to contact the student's home to verify. However, discrete enquiries will need to be made to try and corroborate the story from a reliable source.
- Once the death is confirmed, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take the lead in ensuring all necessary actions in Appendix 4 are taken.

The Death of an ex-student

Procedure for a student not enrolled but who may have attended in the last three years:

- Verification of death.
- The Director of MIS should be informed, they will ensure all records relating to the learner are archived appropriately and no further correspondence sent to the deceased. Also to include Finance,
- Learning Resource Centre, Additional Learning Support, Pastoral Coaches etc.
- The relevant Head of Department should be informed who will inform relevant staff and if appropriate, learners who may have known the learner. Curriculum also to ensure that any locally held records/letters etc are sent to the Director of MIS for appropriate archiving
- The Head of Department: Marketing should be informed who will deal with any press requests.

The Death of a Prospective Wirral Met College Student

Procedure for a prospective student who has applied for a Wirral Metropolitan College course.

- Verification of death.

- The Director of MIS will ensure all admissions records relating to the learner are archived appropriately and no further correspondence sent to the deceased.
- The Director of MIS should be informed, they will also ensure all records relating to the learner are archived appropriately and no further correspondence sent to the deceased. Also to include Finance, Additional Learner Support, Pastoral Coaches etc.
- The relevant course staff should be informed who will ensure any local records/letters are sent to the Director of MIS for appropriate archiving.

Appendix 1 – Abuse, Specific & Other Specific Safeguarding Issues

(Taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance September 2025)

Indicators of abuse and neglect (under 18's)

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. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

- **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.
- **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.. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a 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. Females can also be abusers as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child on child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of the college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.
- **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 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 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.

All staff be aware that child sexual and child criminal exploitation are forms of child abuse.

The following forms and patterns of abuse against adults are taken from Wirral Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures: (adults at risk)

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic abuse** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence and FGM (female genital mutilation), forced marriage as well as coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate or familial relationships.
- **Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery**– encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, hate crime or religion
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- **Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health and surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult’s ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this without external support.

- **Radicalisation is** comparable to other forms of exploitation, such as grooming and child sexual exploitation. Radicalisation's aim is to attract people to another way of reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable people of another cause's legitimacy. This may be through face-to-face encounters or through social media. There are a number of factors that may make a person susceptible to exploitation by violent extremists. None of these factors should be considered in isolation but in conjunction with the individual circumstances.

Key Specific Safeguarding Issues (Adapted from Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance September 2025)

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imaginary) put children in danger.

Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

Child-on-child abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise this indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;

sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

• **Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being

- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Children who are absent from education

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded

- ‘Denial of Service’ (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover ‘cyber-enabled’ crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, ‘NPCC- When to call the Police’ and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on

children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available on the Operation Encompass website.

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse | Safelives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- Home : Operation Encompass (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets. The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourages those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: [here](#).

Mental health

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress at college.

More information can be found in the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance, colleges may also wish to follow this guidance as best practice. Public Health England. 149 has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children. See Better Health Every Mind Matters for links to all materials and lesson plans

Modern slavery and the National Referral

Mechanism Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK

Preventing radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools or colleges safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern.

It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) making a Prevent referral.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) and other senior leaders in education settings should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of three

general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities and reducing permissive environments.

The school or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multiagency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: Channel guidance and Channel training from the Home Office.

Additional support

The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

Educate Against Hate, is a government website designed to support school and college teachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

For advice specific to further education, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the Prevent for FE and Training. This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources

to support further education settings to comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals

The Safeguarding and Prevent - The Education and Training Foundation (etfoundation.co.uk) provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, to support staff and governors/Board members in outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

London Grid for Learning has also produced useful resources on Prevent (Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net))

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. 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.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Serious violence

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

Professionals should also be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before or just after school, when pupils are travelling to and from school. These times can be particularly risky for young people involved in serious violence.

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). As appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with the police and local authority children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on **teachers** that requires a different approach (see below).

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM

appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

Further information can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and the FGM resource pack particularly section 13.

(The College Safeguarding Manager will support you with this)

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: [Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage](#) (chapter 8 provides guidance on the role of schools and colleges) and, [Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage](#), which can both be found at [The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

Any concerns need to be documented using the Safeguarding Referral Shield on the staff intranet (My Concern) and the Safeguarding Manager or other Designated Manager contacted immediately.

For further information:

www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk

If you have concerns about a child or young person contact: 0151 606 2008

Appendix 2 - Do's & Don'ts Staff Guidance

If you have concerns regarding a student, or a student discloses their concerns to you, try to remember the following Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Listen to the student carefully and take what is said seriously
- Watch and notice any changes in behaviour
- Re-assure the student: let them know what has happened is not their fault
- Reach agreement with the student about what happens next, they should be in control
- Tell the student what YOU are going to do next
- Watch your reactions & body language
- ASAP AFTER talking, record what the student has said, using their words, on the Safeguarding Referral Shield (My Concern) software.
- Try not to touch or cuddle the student who is talking to you it may trigger unwanted reactions or emotions
- Refer this to your Safeguarding Manager or another Designated Manager immediately.

DON'T

- Don't interrogate. Evidence could be lost if you prompt the student or put words into the student's mouth.
- Don't show anger towards the accused person. The student may have mixed emotions about this person and a sense of loyalty. They may want the abuse to stop but may not want to be separated from the person who could be their prime carer.
- Don't promise confidentiality. The Safeguarding, Protection of Children and Adults at Risk Policy & Procedures do not allow us to keep disclosures confidential.
- Don't make false promises that you may not be able to keep. Reassure the student that they have done the right thing but don't assume that the 'abuser' will be punished or imprisoned, as this may not happen.
- Don't forget that there may be other children involved that we may not know about and could be affected by this disclosure; we have a duty towards them too.
- Don't assume that someone else knows and will help – you must act.

Don't let the matter go without reporting it, or discussing it with the Safeguarding Manager or another Designated Manager.

Appendix 3(a): Action Checklist for death of any current student

Student name:

Student number:

Action to be Taken	Responsibility	Timescale	Initials when complete	Date
Inform Chair of Governors	Principal	As soon as death is confirmed		
Inform relevant Head of Department, Maths and English Managers	Director of Specialist Provision & Support	As soon as death is confirmed and (if relevant) Police agree information can be shared. This would normally be after the next of kin has been informed.		
Inform relevant staff and fellow students (to include relevant ALS, Maths and English Tutors, Pastoral Coaches, etc. who may have worked with the student, also consider student finance if the student received vulnerable bursary payments)	Head of Department (including Maths and English) Director of Specialist Provision & Support	As above (Accept that some students may talk to the press so ensure that they receive only factual information not speculation.)		

Send letter of condolence to the family/next of kin	Principal	As soon as is deemed appropriate.		
Ascertain funeral arrangements and decide who/if the College will be represented formally.	Head of Department	Once funeral date and details are released		
Ensure all records relating to the student are amended appropriately and no further correspondence sent to the deceased. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers • Pro-Solution • ProMonitor • Automated texts/letters 	Director of MIS	As soon as death is confirmed.		
Ensure any outstanding financial issues between the student and the college are dealt with appropriately	Finance Director	As soon as death is confirmed		
Ensure any outstanding library loans are dealt with appropriately	LRC Manager	As soon as death is confirmed		
Inform any relevant work placement provider/employer/sub-contract provider.	Head of Department	As soon as death is confirmed and (if relevant) Police agree information can be shared.		
Agree appropriate bereavement counselling or informal emotional support for students from Counsellors/Pastoral Support Mentors	ALS Manager; Safeguarding Manager	As soon as death is confirmed		

Ensure any belongings such as contents of locker are returned to student's family	Director of Estates	After funeral has taken place.		
Offer emotional support to affected staff	Relevant Managers; HR Manager	As soon as death is confirmed		
Be aware of press interest, if applicable	Head of Manager in liaison with Principal	As necessary		
Delete any marketing/promotional materials featuring the student, to ensure they are not used in the future	Head of Marketing	As soon as death is confirmed		

Appendix 3(b): Additional Action Checklist for death of a student on-site or in the care of College staff.

Action to be Taken	Responsibility	Timescale	Initials when complete	Date
Liaise with police and coroner's office (if required)	Principal	Immediately		
Liaise with the Police to ensure the relevant access / security is provided if necessary Arrange for any remedial action e.g. cleaning needed once the Police provide permission for such action	Director Estates	As instructed by Police		
Arrange for any reports under RIDDOR to be sent to the HSE if necessary, and lead any Health and Safety investigation deemed appropriate by the Principal	Director Estates	As appropriate to circumstances		
Decide what, if any, form of internal investigation needs to be implemented and who will lead this.	Principal / Health and Safety Manager	As appropriate to circumstances		
Approve press releases if appropriate (in collaboration with Police press officer where necessary)	Principal (with Head of Marketing Manager)	As appropriate to circumstances		

Appendix 4

Guidance for teaching staff addressing a class about a death

Note: *This is not intended to be a script for talking with students. An address will need to be adapted depending on who is talking with the class and the particular circumstances of the death. Ideally the class tutor will address the class if able to contain personal emotions, as the tutor usually knows the deceased student and peers as well. Counsellors can be present for additional support or to address the class if the tutor feels unable to do this.*

I would like to extend my sympathy to all of you – both to ‘John’s’ classmates and the staff who taught him. I realise that you are all very shocked by this tragic news. I am sure many of you still cannot believe it has happened. It will take time to come to terms with ‘John’s’ death.

I appreciate that we cannot take away your pain, but I want you to know that your department and the college services will do all we can to help you through this difficult time. Some of you may feel overwhelmed, others may feel less affected, and others may re-experience past losses. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts, and these feelings will have to be lived through. There are many ways in which people react to the death of a friend. You might experience a range of emotions including shock, numbness, anger, fear, regret etc. Physically you may be tearful, shaky, lose your concentration and motivation, feel like not eating or sleeping etc.

(Additional note if the death was by suicide) Any death is tragic, but a death by suicide is particularly difficult for us all. Many of you may feel confused, angry or guilty. You may have lots of questions – why, what could have been done, etc. Give these questions time and then talk them through with your friends, family and staff members here in college.

Department staff may attend the funeral with you and notify the Principal who will send a letter of condolence to the family.

In dealing with your loss you may wish to:

1. Talk with your classmates/tutors and your families about your feelings
2. Meet individually with a member of the Mental Health Well Being Team or Counsellor in college.
3. Meet individually with a Pastoral Coach who can provide a listening ear.
4. Have a group appointment with a counsellor if there is a group of you who were particularly close to ‘John’. I am happy to facilitate this.
5. Make a memorial card/poem to your deceased friend and/or family of the deceased.
6. Seek help from outside agencies such as CRUISE, Papyrus or www.uk-sobs.org.uk (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide)

Further information, guidance and support regarding student suicide can also be found in ‘Building suicide-safer schools and Colleges’ on the college intranet here

Appendix 5 Advice for staff following a death by suicide

After the death of a student, staff members can help classmates process the information and cope with their emotions. Although you may feel inadequate and worry that you may say something wrong, by trying to understand what a student is feeling, a valuable genuineness is evoked and usually appreciated. It is helpful to draw on your own experiences of death and loss. If you have concerns about a student or group of students, please contact the Mental Health Wellbeing Team Leader, ALS Manager or Safeguarding Manager.

Respect the family wishes regarding the death. One family may refuse to label the death as a suicide, while another family will find it acceptable to refer to their child's struggles with depression. If you are unsure about the wishes of the family, please try to clarify these e.g. with the curriculum manager.

Listen, care and do not be alarmed by tears. Students, like most people, will benefit from discussing their thoughts and concerns. This dialogue is a healthy beginning for grieving.

Minimise hysteria by maintaining a stable college environment. In addition to being professional and calm, do not use dramatic exaggerated or sensational language that will inflame a situation.

Ensure that all information given to students is honest, factual and clear. This honesty works to build up trust. It is hoped that if students need support they will be more likely to feel they can ask for it.

Use the word 'suicide' when discussing the death. It is best to acknowledge the death honestly for what it is, rather than using euphemisms. You cannot put the idea of suicide in someone's head just using the word.

Avoid providing simple explanations or glorifying the deceased student.

Suicide is a complex event with many motivating factors, usually including mental illness. When possible, it is more useful to acknowledge the deceased's achievements and problems (without divulging confidential information).

Emphasise that suicide is not a good choice for dealing with problems. Unfortunately, suicide will always be an option, but staff members can help students see other ways out of their problems.

Reinforce the reality that death is a permanent solution to temporary problems. A romantic image of suicide may blur the realisation that death is forever, while problems can be dealt with and solved.

Remind students that support and help are available in the college and in the wider community. Although their problems may be perceived as overwhelming, students need to be reassured that people who love them and professionals are available to help them tackle serious issues.

Watch for students who seem to be affected beyond the 'normal' grieving intensity and duration. The suicide of a classmate may be a trigger event for students who are experiencing mental illness or who have a history of distress themselves. Seeing how the

bereaved student is missed and eulogised may create dangerous allure for a potential copycat suicide.

Do not respond to media enquiries and direct journalists to the Principal's office. Out of respect for the grieving family, and as a form of self-protection, encourage students not to speak to the media about the death. (In previous crisis situations elsewhere, upset students made comments to the press that they later regretted. This made their grieving process more complicated and traumatic).

Take care of yourself

The death of a student can be upsetting for everyone involved. Please look after yourself, talk with colleagues and seek support as needed.

Appendix 6 – Additional measures and considerations in the event of campus closures (e.g. due to further COVID-19 outbreaks).

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak and enforced lock downs. All college campuses are now fully open, in line with Government guidance. This annex sets out some of the adjustments that must be put back into place in the event of any future campus closure.

Despite any necessary changes to operating practices, Wirral Met's Safeguarding, Protection & Promoting the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk Policy is fundamentally the same: students always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Safeguarding Manager in line with our established safeguarding procedure.

In the event of a campus closure, arrangements are in place for students to access remote and on-line learning, similarly for staff to be able to work from home. All support services to students remain in place, albeit remotely, and incorporates pastoral mentor support, mental health, safeguarding, counselling and specialist learning support through specialist support tutors. Closure of the campuses will be reviewed regularly and in line with Government guidance. All students who fall into a recognised vulnerable group, have an EHCP or are under statutory process with children's social care must be identified and appropriate support mechanisms put in place, inclusive of regular communication with allocated social workers and virtual schools where appropriate, plus access to on-site learning by exception and in line with government and public health guidance.

Reporting arrangements

The college arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding, Protection & Promoting the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lorraine Jones; 07904016154;
lorrainejones@wmc.ac.uk

The Assistant Safeguarding Managers are:

Elisha Smith: 0151 551 7435; 07990592134; elishasmith@wmc.ac.uk
Sarah Wilson: 0151 551 7035; 07852000983; sarahwilson@wmc.ac.uk

The Deputy Designated Managers are:

Ste Bailey; 07827983488; stebailey@wmc.ac.uk
Phil Jones: 07848147403; phillipjones@wmc.ac.uk
Chris Carter: 07983347274; Christinecarter@wmc.ac.uk
Kevin Williams 0151 5517411; kevinwilliams@wmc.ac.uk

The college's approach ensures the Safeguarding Manager, Assistant Safeguarding Manager, DSL, or a deputy safeguarding lead is always available during the college's hours of operation.

Staff will continue to follow the Safeguarding, Protection and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk procedure and advise the safeguarding manager or deputy immediately about concerns they have about any student, whether in college or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a student is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority.

The arrangements for contacting children's services are: contact Integrated Front Door (IFD) 0151 606 2008 for under 18's

For 18+ adults at risk contact Adult Social Care CADT: 0151 606 2006

Should a student in the college's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the college will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure.

Identifying vulnerability

The most vulnerable students must be identified, and contact made with appropriate social workers, lead professionals and key workers to notify them of the move to remote and on line learning.

This includes our students who have child looked after status, care leavers, students who are subject of child protection or child in need plan, under Team Around the Family, early help/targeted support, students estranged from parents and living in alternative accommodation, young carers and students who have an EHCP in place.

Students will receive regular contact through their allocated pastoral support mentor, mental health worker, specialist support tutor and/or their personal tutors as appropriate and in line with their individual needs. The Safeguarding Manager and Assistant Safeguarding Managers will maintain contact with allocated social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Virtual School and other key professionals as required.

NB Contact will be made remotely through telephone calls, text messages or emails by default, and in-person onsite by exception and in line with Government and Public Health advice.

Staff will continue to log contacts via Pro-Monitor and raise any safeguarding concerns by instigating the safeguarding procedures and contacting the safeguarding manager or another designated manager in her absence.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on students and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for students to undertake at home.

Staff will be aware of the mental health of both students and their parents and carers and make referrals to the College Mental Health Workers (for students) accordingly. If staff feel that a student is at risk of significant harm they should inform the Safeguarding Manager about any concerns. <https://safeguarding.network/safeguarding-resources/specific-risks-children-additional-needs/mental-health/>

The Department for Education have produced guidance to support parents: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Child on child abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a college closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between students who are not currently attending our provision

Risk online

Students will be using the internet more during this period. The college may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when students are learning at the college.

The college continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place. Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate. Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the college's code of conduct and importance of using college systems to communicate with children and their families.

Students accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the college, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.

It is extremely important that professional boundaries do not slip during this exceptional period and protocols for online working have been issued to staff involved in live-streaming of lessons.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements in place students could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or online abuse. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to either the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lorraine Jones), a Deputy Safeguarding Manager (Ste Bailey, Phil Jones, Chris Carter, Kevin Williams) or HR. Any allegations will be dealt with in line with our usual policy.

New staff or volunteers

All new starters must attend an induction which will include Safer Working Practice workshop. They must complete the online Mandatory Training as directed by Learning and Development.

The Safeguarding Manager will ensure new starters know who to contact if worried about a student and ensure they are familiar with the Safeguarding Procedures