



Wirral Met College

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

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Policy

1. 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.
- Informed by statutory guidance and recommendations, this document incorporates:
 - **Proactive** approach through training and raising awareness
 - **Reactive** response in ensuring appropriate intervention and support for both early help and protection issues
 - **Reflective** practice by learning through experience and supervision
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by Working Together to Safeguarding Children as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- The aims of adult safeguarding as outlined in The Care Act 2014 are to:
 - prevent harm and reduce risk of abuse to adults with care and support needs
 - stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
 - safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
 - promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for adults concerned
 - raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
 - provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or wellbeing of an adult.

2. Definitions

- Children are students who have not yet reached their 18th Birthday but in the case of SEN it is up to 25 years of age.
- An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or 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 i.e. domestic/relationship abuse, under 18 and have caring responsibilities, child in care/care leaver, under 18 and estranged from family, young parent or young mum to be, offending behaviour.

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 in this college.

3. Policy Statement

- The Governing Body is committed to, 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 provides child/vulnerable adult 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 and in the work place.
 - has 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 Governing Body, will take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), Merseyside Adults Safeguarding Board and other relevant agencies, bodies and groups.
- All staff, including agency and substantial contractors such as Aramark, will receive training to familiarise them 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, monthly safeguarding briefings will be disseminated through email, and staff meetings. The Be Safe Information Portal is also in place and maintained.

- There will be a member of the Senior Leadership team nominated as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection issues. S/he will be assisted by the College Safeguarding Manager (CSM) and other managers, who have also received training, authorised to act on behalf of Wirral Met College.
- DSL, CSM and other Designated Managers will undertake higher level training to enable them give advice and guidance, make decisions about safeguarding and protection issues and take appropriate action. Refresher training will take place every 2 years.
- The Governing Body will receive an annual report which will review, update and inform how the safeguarding and protection duties have been discharged in line with statutory guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016).
- Referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will, as far as is practicable, be made by the College Safeguarding Manager or other 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.

4. Supporting Students

- We recognise 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. Our college may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- We accept that the behaviour of a student in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- Our college will support all students by:
 - ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning; Through tutorials and other curriculum contexts, pupils are encouraged to talk about feelings and deal assertively with pressures, are listened to, and know to whom they can turn to for help and advice;
 - 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' (KCSIE 2018)

supporting the 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, enabling students to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding 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 and will support young people to become more resilient to inappropriate behaviours towards them, risk taking behaviours and behaviours that children may be coerced into including 'sexting' and 'Harmful Sexualised Behaviour';
- having a behaviour policy that is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the college. The college will ensure that each student knows 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 'contextual safeguarding', which considers wider environmental factors in a student's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare (working together 2018) and KCSIE 2018
- liaising with a range of agencies that support the student such as Health Services, Wirral Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Special Educational Support Services, Youth Offending Service and the Educational Psychology Service.
- ensuring that, when a student who is the subject of a Child Protection 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 that is looked after (CLA) or has been previously looked after by the Local Authority potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep CLA and previously looked after children 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 our Fitness to Study Policy as an alternative to our standard Student Disciplinary Policy where a student's poor behaviour is directly linked to their disability or learning difficulty

- Applying our Use of Reasonable Force policy to ensure that, if a student's behaviour is putting themselves or others at risk of physical harm, physical intervention is used only as a last resort and with minimal risk of causing harm to the individual.

5. Inter-Agency Working

- We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care. 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.
- We will ensure that relevant staff members, mainly the College Safeguarding Manager, will participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.
- We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, and embed recommendations into practice and compile required actions within agreed timescales.

6. 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
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018)
- The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
- The Care Act 2014

7. Monitoring and Review

- a. 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 Governing Body.
- b. The policy and procedure will be reviewed and agreed on an annual basis by the Governing Body.

- c. Safeguarding, Protection and Promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk, particularly number of cases, issues presented and training compliance will be monitored by the Governing Body, at regular Board Meetings, through the Balance Score Card and interim reports.

8. Additional Policies and Procedures

- a. Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
- b. Whistle blowing Policy and Procedure
- c. Storage and handling of Disclosures Policy
- d. Staff Development Policy
- e. Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy and Procedure
- f. Policy and Procedure for Placing Students on Work Placement
- g. Data Protection Policy
- h. Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- i. Student Anti Bullying Policy
- j. ICT Usage Policy – Staff
- k. ICT Usage Policy – Students
- l. Equality & Diversity Policy
- m. Guidance for Working with Young People and Adults at risk
- n. Students Social Media Guidance
- o. Staff Social Media Guidance
- p. Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- q. Tutorial Policy
- r. Disciplinary Procedure (Staff)
- s. Fitness to Study Policy
- t. Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Child/Adult at Risk Protection Procedure

All staff should recognise that students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities 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 SEN and disabilities 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 peer on peer abuse. Peer on peer 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; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. More information is provided under Appendix 1.

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

1. How to deal with suspected/allegation of 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, child sexual exploitation, peer on peer abuse, children with special needs, domestic abuse 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 a Vulnerable Adult 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 students own words, verbatim if possible, even if this means using unsavoury language or swear words do not sanitise the words. Appendix 2 provides a Record of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse proforma that should be used.
- 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.
- Once you have spoken to the Safeguarding Manager/Designated Manager pass your recording and any other appropriate documentation to them – **DO NOT MAKE OR KEEP COPIES AND DO NOT RECORD ANY DETAILED INFORMATION ON PRO MONITOR PLEASE RECORD, IN TUTOR COMMENTS UNDER WELFARE, THAT A REFERRAL HAS BEEN MADE TO THE SAFEGUARDING MANAGER.**
- Appendix 3 provides further guidance about Do's and Don'ts when dealing with a safeguarding issue.

2. Designated Managers

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

Designated Manager	Safeguarding Role	Contact
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Lorraine Jones Safeguarding Manager	Matters relating to students, staff and processes.	0151 551 7032 <hr/> 0790 401 6154
Ste Bailey Assistant Principal, Student Support	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection.	0151 551 7012 <hr/> 07827 983 488
Jayne Bayley Campus Manager	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7952 07854696818
Paul Crawford Campus Manager	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7694
Phil Jones Assistant Principal	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7417 07848147403
Alex Lang Assistant Principal	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7036 07969688471
Chris Carter Assistant Principal	General advice and guidance concerning protection incidents	0151 551 7611
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.		
Maura Cummins Vice Principal	General advice and guidance concern protection incidents	0151 551 7047
Michael Norton Deputy Principal	General advice and guidance concern protection incidents	0151 551 7411 <hr/> 07711 079 445
Sue Higginson Principal & CEO	General advice and guidance concern protection incidents	0151 551 7411 <hr/> 07904 017 592
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 through the Clerk of the Corporation		
Paul Smyth Chair of Governors	Safeguarding and protection concerns relating to the Principal ONLY . Contact	<hr/> 07763892923 07895177666

through Lesley Venables,
Clerk to the Corporation.

- The Board of Governors have decided that there should be no nominated Governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding issues. The Chair will assume this accountability on behalf of the Board as necessary.
- 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, or refer the matter to the Safeguarding Manager or a Designated Manager, as soon as possible, on the following day in accordance with this policy and procedure.

3. 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 written details (Record Suspected/Allegation of Abuse– Appendix 2) 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.
- The Request for Services form (for under 18's). This 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 students parents, they need to know why we are concerned about their child. However, if the DM believes that speaking to the students 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 MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). 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, s/he should contact either the MASH (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. Written details should then be sent preferably within 24 hours of the initial disclosure/concern, preferably using the appropriate form above.

- The *student* and referring staff member/manager should know of the action being taken and the reasons for this decision before the appropriate agency is informed, unless doing so would place the *student* at greater risk. Both staff and *student* should be contacted as soon as possible and no later than within 48 hours.
- 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 written records relating to the incident are kept in the designated secure location. This location will be determined by the Safeguarding Manager.
- 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 the DM will need to consider if the Student Disciplinary Procedure or Fitness to Study Policy needs to also be instigated and liaise with the appropriate College Manager. Advice will be sought from MASH and/or the Police if appropriate and will take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved, making associated referrals are required.
- Attendance at Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conference/Core Group Meetings or Child In Need Meetings will be the responsibility of the College Safeguarding Manager or another Designated Manager, who have received training, authorised to act on behalf of Wirral Met College.

4. Record Keeping

- It is vital that all records relating to child/vulnerable adult protection are kept securely with the Safeguarding Manager.
- Staff must not retain information or keep copies. It is very important that all original documents and information is locked in a secure place. **This information must not leave the college premises.**
- Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection records will be kept for 25 years after the student has left Wirral Met College and destroyed with the exception of records relating to students with a looked after/care leaver status. These records will be kept for 100 years.
- Under no circumstance should any safeguarding or protection related information be recorded on Pro-Monitor.

5. 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 emails and updates on a monthly basis.
- 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 HR.
- Specific roles within the college i.e. Pastoral Support Mentors, Counsellors and Safeguarding Manager receive regular supervision sessions

Accessing Early Help Intervention (Under 18's) Procedure

1. 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 Record of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse - Appendix 2 and discussed with the Safeguarding Manager. You must inform the student you are doing this.

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

- On receipt of the completed Record of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse-Appendix 2 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 and associated assessment tools will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Manager. 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.

3. 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.

4. Record Keeping

- It is vital that all records relating to safeguarding are kept securely with the Safeguarding Manager.
- Staff must not retain information or keep copies. It is very important that all original documents and information is locked in a secure place. **This information must not leave the college premises.**
- Safeguarding records will be kept for 25 years after the student has left Wirral Met College and will be destroyed.

5. 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.
- 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 HR.
- Specific roles within the college i.e. Pastoral Support Mentors, Counsellors and Safeguarding Manager receive regular supervision sessions

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.

1. 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.

2. Receiving an allegation or concern

- A member of staff who receives an allegation or has a concern about another member of staff should record their concerns on the Record Suspected/Allegation of Abuse - Appendix 2.
- The allegation should be reported immediately to a Senior Manager or the Safeguarding Manager. The receiving manager will inform the HR Manager immediately who will make an initial assessment of the allegation/concern. Where appropriate the HR Manager will delegate subsequent actions to another Assistant Principal or Designated Manager who should record information about the allegation/concern, the names of potential witnesses and

actions taken. It is important that the HR Manager does not investigate the allegation.

3. Initial Assessment

- The HR Manager should make an initial assessment of the allegation/concern on the basis of the information received, consulting with the (internal) Designated Safeguarding Lead, and if deemed necessary with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Notwithstanding, the LADO should be informed if the member of staff is alleged to have:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a student;
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a student; or
 - behaved towards a student in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children and/or adults at risk
- The initial assessment will need to consider whether:
 - an investigation should take place;
 - the member of staff should be suspended pending an investigation.
 - If so then Wirral Met College Disciplinary Procedure should be followed
 - the matter should be referred to the police;
 - the matter should be referred to the MASH;
 - a combination of these should be instigated;
 - a referral is made to DBS

4. Enquiries and Investigations

- Enquiries 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.

5. Suspension of Staff

- Suspension should not be automatic. In respect of staff other than the Principal, suspension can only be carried out by the Principal, or delegated senior post holder. In respect of the Principal, suspension can only be carried out by the Chair of Governors (or in her/his absence, the Vice Chair). In all cases the HR Manager should be informed.
- Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation. It is a neutral, not a disciplinary, act and shall be on full pay. Consideration should be given to alternatives: e.g. paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work; change of, or withdrawal from, specified duties.
- Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example where:
 - a *student* is at risk;
 - the allegation/concern is potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct;
 - it is necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.
- If suspension is being considered, processes under the College's Disciplinary Procedure will be followed and the member of staff should be encouraged to seek advice from a trade union or work colleague.
- Where a member of staff is suspended the Chair of Governors and the Clerk to the Corporation should be informed of the suspension in writing.
- Only senior staff that need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed.
- The Principal should give consideration to what information should be made available to the general population of Wirral Met College or the public, taking due regard of the need to avoid unwelcome publicity and to protect the reputation of Wirral Met College.
- The suspended member of staff should be given appropriate support during the period of suspension. S/he should also be provided with information on progress and developments in the case at regular intervals.
- The suspension should remain under review in accordance with Wirral Met College disciplinary procedures. A member of staff who has been suspended may appeal for the suspension to be lifted. The appeal shall be in writing to the Clerk to the Corporation.

6. The Disciplinary Investigation

- The disciplinary investigation should be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures, using the Guidelines for Investigating Officers. That the member of staff resigns or offers to resign shall not prevent the procedure from reaching a conclusion.
- A disciplinary hearing will be held in accordance with college procedures and where the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary action will be taken and the member of staff informed of their right of appeal.
- Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension should be lifted immediately and arrangements made for the member of staff to return to work. It may be appropriate to offer counselling.
- The party raising the allegation/concern should be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings if/where appropriate. This should occur prior to the return to College of the member of staff (if suspended).

7. Referrals to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

- If it is determined that the staff member poses a risk to children and or adults at risk a referral to the DBS will be required.
- This referral will be made by the Deputy Principal.

8. 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.

9. Record Keeping

- 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.

- All records relating to members of staff will be held in the HR department.
- 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.

10. 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 WSCB. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

11. Protecting yourself from allegations

- All staff should maintain strict professional boundaries with students. The forming of a personal relationship with a *student* is strongly discouraged and in certain circumstances could lead to disciplinary action.
- It is recognised that some roles are designated to work with close contact with *students* including working alone with them. However, you should seek to keep your personal contact with *students* under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur.
- Consider taking the following sensible precautions, where possible and appropriate, when working alone with a *student*.
 - work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door, leave the door open or make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally
 - always observe personal boundaries and physical personal space
 - avoid working in isolation with a *student* unless thought has been given to safeguards and other colleagues or a manager is made aware
 - avoid being alone with a *student* where it is not an expected part of your normal job role
 - do not use personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses for contacting *students* for non-College purposes and that are not associated with your role
 - do not give *students* lifts home in your cars

- do not arrange to meet *students* alone outside of timetabled hours
- do not 'chat' to *students* on social websites or accept them as 'friends'
- avoid regular contact with *students* in their "free" time that could be construed as attempting to form a relationship with them
- Where necessary, if you have to meet or transport a *student* alone, then inform your College Manager or the parent/carer of the *student* in advance of doing so.
- Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a *student* even when the *student* is over the age of consent.
- Any use of physical force or restraint against a *student* must be documented and drawn to the attention of the relevant College Manager immediately.
- All staff should follow the Guidance for Working 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.

Risk Management Procedures

1. 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 College Manager of the appropriate area or other manager identified in this policy, should be informed.

2. 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 Assistant Principal, Student Support. In the case of criminal convictions the College Manager for the curriculum 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 Offenders Service (YOS), 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.
- 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.

3. 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 with the Safeguarding Manager. Under no circumstances should information be recorded on Pro Monitor.

4. 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. A pro-forma risk assessment/management plan template is provided in the Useful Forms section of the Safeguarding webpage on Wirral Met College staff intranet.
- It is vital that all records relating to safeguarding are kept securely with the Safeguarding Manager.
- Staff must not retain information or keep copies. It is very important that all original documents and information is locked in a secure place. **This information must not leave the college premises.**
- Safeguarding records will be kept for 25 years after the student has left Wirral Met College and will be destroyed.

5. 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.
- 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 HR.

Procedure for Dealing with the Death of a Student

1. 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.

2. 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) A College manager 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 Assistant Principal, Student Support, who will take the lead in ensuring all necessary actions in Appendix 4 are taken.

3. 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 Assistant Principal, Student Support will take the lead in ensuring all necessary actions in Appendix 4 are taken.

4. 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, library, additional support, Pastoral Support Mentors etc.
- The relevant Curriculum Manager 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 Director of Marketing should be informed who will deal with any press requests.

5. 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 Student Services 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 support, Pastoral Support Mentors 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 & Other Specific Safeguarding Issues

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

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 in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known

to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children

- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education
- **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.

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

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence** – 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 and exploitation of vulnerable people**

Other Specific Safeguarding Issues (click on the hyperlink for further information)

Peer on Peer abuse:

- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children](#)
- [Gangs and youth violence](#)
- [Sexting](#)
 - Initiating/hazing type violence and rituals Hazing is the practice of putting someone in physical and or emotional distress to gain access to a club, society or group as part of an initiation process. Aside from physical violence, it can include sexual coercion, forced alcohol consumption, or dangerous "pranks" like forcing people to eat vile food mixtures or consume large amounts of water.
- [Bullying \(including cyberbullying\)](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of Children & Vulnerable Adults \(County Lines\)](#)

[Children missing from home or care](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\)](#)

[Fabricated Induced Illness](#)

[Missing Children and adults](#)

[Private fostering](#)

[Preventing radicalisation and extremism](#)

[Protecting children from radicalisation](#)

[Trafficking and modern slavery](#)

Any concerns need to be documented using the Record of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse - Appendix 2 and the Safeguarding Manager or other Designated Manager contacted immediately.

Appendix 2



Wirral Met College

Safeguarding, Protection and Promoting the Welfare of Children & Adults at risk

Record of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse

Section 1: Basic Details						
Student Name:			Student Reference:			
Personal Tutor:			Age:			
Section 2: Disclosure/Concern						
Type of Abuse <i>Please tick relevant boxes</i>						
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual
Other Safeguarding issue:						
Student has SEN and/or disabilities						Yes/No
Name of those involved in conversation with student:						
Date, Time and Location of conversation:						

Details of Suspected/Allegation of Abuse

(Record what the student has said, using their words, record dates and times, names of witnesses, any visible or reported injuries, how the student is feeling, your observations)

Section 5: Additional Information	
Details of any outside agency involvement (if known)	
Students preferred action if not an immediate "at risk" situation	
Students Signature (if appropriate)	Signature of Staff Member
Date:	Date:
Section 6: Actions Taken <i>To be completed by Safeguarding Manager or other Designated Manager</i>	

Appendix 3 - 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, write notes using the students actual words
- 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 4(a): Action Checklist for death of any current student

Action to be Taken	Responsibility	Timescale	Initials when complete	Date
Inform Chair of Governors	Principal	As soon as death is confirmed		
Inform relevant curriculum manager	Assistant Principal, Student 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, Pastoral Support Mentors, etc who may have worked with the student)	Curriculum Manager; AP Student 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.	Curriculum Manager	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	Director of Finance	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.	College Manager	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 Facilities	After funeral has taken place.		

Offer emotional support to affected staff	Relevant Managers; HR Manager	As soon as death is confirmed		
Prepare press releases if appropriate	Director of Marketing in liaison with Principal	As necessary		

Appendix 4(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 of Facilities	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 of Facilities	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 Director of Marketing)	As appropriate to circumstances		

Appendix 5

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 Counsellor in college.
3. Meet individually with a Learning Mentor 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 6 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 Student Counselling Service 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.