

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction

The University of Reading makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. It is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in so far as they are engaged in University-related activities and services.

This policy applies to all employees, students, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers who are engaged in the work of the University. It will support and give guidance to staff in their practices and clarify the University's expectations.

The University comes into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults through a range of activities such as outreach activities, residential stays, Open Days and counselling. There are also students who are under the age of 18 when they commence their studies and areas of the University that have a very specific relationship with children. The University also teaches programmes that involve students working with children and vulnerable adults.

The policy is separate to that of individual departmental policies such as the Counselling Service and research groups, but is intended to be an overarching framework which seeks to ensure that the University undertakes its statutory responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and the safeguarding of its members, and that it responds to concerns appropriately.

The University cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people under the age of 18 who are present on University premises without its knowledge or consent. Therefore, parents, guardians, schools or groups who bring their children onto the University campus must take responsibility for their safety and welfare and ensure that their children do not disturb others or damage University property.

2. Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Working together to safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002:
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations
- Mental Health Act 1983

- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

3. Definitions

The University recognises the definitions set out by *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and the *Care Act 2014*.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and / or vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse includes acts or risks of harm, oppression, discrimination, exploitation and manipulation of power. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse and neglect may not always be intentional but always requires a response. Children and vulnerable adults may be perpetrators as well as victims of abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect is not restricted to any particular group in society and can take a number of forms, including the following:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- bullying;
- discriminatory;
- modern slavery;
- neglect; and
- financial (or material) abuse.

Child

A child is a person under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

For the purposes of this policy, a person may be vulnerable in some circumstances but not in others. For example, students may be rendered vulnerable because of the imbalance of power in their relationships (for example, with staff) or because they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism or extremism.

4. Key principles

The University of Reading recognises that it has obligations to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults involved in University activities on campus.

The University policies and procedures observe the relevant statutory duties and guidance documents and are informed by good practice across the higher education sector. The University seeks to follow best practice by putting reasonable structures in place to support safeguarding and takes all concerns seriously, responding to concerns promptly and referring to the local authority and/or police as appropriate.

Anyone may witness or become aware of information suggesting that abuse and neglect is or is at risk of occurring and it must not be assumed that someone else will share the information. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse directly to a member of staff this should always be taken seriously.

It is not everyone's responsibility to investigate concerns but it is everyone's responsibility to share concerns appropriately and for them to be reported to the appropriate authority through the Designated Safeguarding leads). Early sharing of information is key to providing an effective response to concerns.

5. Responsibilities

Everyone to whom this policy applies has a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies and to pass on any concerns of abuse or risks of abuse promptly using the required procedures.

Anyone who feels it is necessary to report a safeguarding concern to an agency external to the University will be able to do so, and will inform their relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer of their action as soon as possible.

The University expects everyone to whom this policy applies to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contributing to discussions about safeguarding, being mindful of circumstances that may lead to themselves or others being made vulnerable and positively involving people in developing safe practices. Additional specific responsibilities:

1. The University Executive Board is responsible for ensuring that:
 - there is commitment across the University to safeguarding;
 - there are appropriate resources committed to safeguarding;
 - that the lines of responsibility in respect of safeguarding are clear; and that
 - all efforts are made to highlight safeguarding measures to staff and students.
2. The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead is the University Secretary, who has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Day-to-day

operational responsibility for this policy, including the matters below, has been delegated to the Director of Student Services, who will:

- take responsibility for the monitor and review of policy;
- oversight and management of the Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- ensure that staff have access to appropriate training/information;
- ensure safeguarding systems are robust and concerns are managed swiftly and appropriately and where necessary cases are referred to social services and/or the police;
- ensure that accurate written records of referrals/concerns are stored securely and shared appropriately (where concerns have not required referral to social services or the police, a record should still be retained)
- keep up-to-date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.

3. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will be identified within the University and will be appropriately trained in safeguarding issues.

The DSLs are:

- The Director of Counselling and Wellbeing
- The Student Welfare Team Manager
- The Senior Student Welfare Officer

Their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are:

- To ensure the appropriate referral of children who may be at risk of significant harm to Children's Social Care services and/or the police;
- To ensure the appropriate referral of a Vulnerable Adult who is or maybe suffering serious harm to Adult Social Care Services and /or the police;
- To be able to provide advice and support to staff on issues relating children and Vulnerable Adult protection;
- To support the student and ensure they are central to the process and kept informed throughout;
- To respond to individual cases, including attending multi-disciplinary conferences as appropriate;
- To maintain proper records of referrals, complaints or concerns;
- To ensure recording is properly stored and archived;
- To give feedback to the member of staff/liase as appropriate taking information sharing and confidentiality issues into account;
- undergo available safeguarding training and undertake refresher training as appropriate; and
- To provide information and advice within the University on safeguarding issues.

4. Safeguarding Co-ordinators (SC's) will be identified within the University and will be appropriately trained in safeguarding issues.

The SC's are:

- School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDAT's)

- **Support Centre Managers (for Schools other than Henley Business School)**
- **Head of Programme administration (for Henley Business School)**
- **Student Welfare Officer Lead (for International Study and Language Institute)**
- **Wardens (for halls of residence)**
- **Student Financial Support and Helpdesk Manager (in all other instances)**

Their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are:

- **To act as an initial source of support, advice and guidance to students and staff;**
 - **To refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Designated Safeguarding Leads;**
 - **To liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads regarding any ongoing investigations where necessary; and**
 - **To ensure that staff within their school or service areas are aware of and adhere to the policy and procedures set out in this guidance.**
5. **Head of Admissions is responsible for decisions on admittance and any relevant special measures that the University may take when admitting under 18s into University accommodation.**
 6. **Head of Global Recruitment (UK and Outreach) is responsible for providing advice on any risk assessment process for activities focused on students under 18 or vulnerable adults on campus.**
 7. **Where a staff role has been identified as requiring a DBS check, Human Resources is responsible for communicating with the relevant staff member, and for ensuring that DBS checks are carried out. Where a DBS checks reveals information that requires consideration or action they will liaise with the relevant line manager of the staff member and the Head of School or Function to take any necessary actions.**

6. Relevant policies and provision

The scope of this policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

- **Criminal Convictions Disclosure Policy (students and applicants)**
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy**
- **Policy and Procedures for the admission of under 18s onto undergraduate programmes (which also applies to those on undergraduate preparation courses)**
- **Safety Note 54 - Children on University Premises**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Disciplinary Procedure**
- **Staff DBS checks and Employing Ex-Offenders: Guide to Policies and Procedures for Managers of Applicants**
- **Equality and Diversity Policy**

- **Guidelines on the management of student disclosure of criminal convictions in the context of volunteering and placement learning**
- **Remote Working Policy**
- **Information Security Policy**
- **Prevent Policy Statement**
- **Public Interest Disclosure ('Whistleblowing') Policy and Procedures**
- **Staff induction**
- **Staff training**
- **Research Ethics Committee**

Safe Recruitment

The University of Reading ensures safe recruitment of staff (including those involved in volunteering/community-based activities) to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. This includes the commitment of resources to undertaking Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks or relevant equivalent investigations where staff have lived overseas where necessary. Recruitment processes include identity checks, collecting acceptable references and good practice questions in interviews.

An individual taking part in temporary work experience within the University working with children or vulnerable adults will not require a DBS check, but must be supervised by an appropriate staff member at all times.

For further information, see the University's DBS policy and/or the Home Office DBS website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be undertaken for organised activities which involve bringing children and/or vulnerable adults on to campus. The risk assessment and details of the event must be approved by the Estates and Facilities department and Head of Department prior to any event taking place.

Risk Assessments should include: a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and especially vulnerable groups, and an assessment on how risks can be mitigated or avoided where practicable to prevent harm. Careful consideration should be given to activity where staff members will have one-to-one access to people, and especially vulnerable groups, and where any University activity is delivered off-campus. The nature, length and intensity of contact with a child/vulnerable adult should be considered to help identify the context within which the risks should be managed.

Activities where a Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check is required should be identified. This would apply to staff or students where their normal duties fall within the definition of Regulated Activity or are listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended) or the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records)

(Registration) Regulations 2006. Decisions in relation to who should be subject to a DBS check should be in line with the University's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy. Service delivery contracting and Sub-contracting

There will be appropriate checking of the safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations. Contracts for partnership delivery work will, where appropriate, include clear minimum requirements, arrangements for safeguarding and non-compliance procedures.

7. Training

All staff regardless of role will be made aware of, and be familiar with, this policy through the Staff Induction process.

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training and information at an appropriate level and be aware of child protection issues and the procedures in place to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of abuse.

Staff with particular responsibilities, such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Co-ordinators will be required to undertake appropriate training in order to fulfil the requirements of the role.

All staff who undertake safeguarding training must store and maintain their training records whilst they are employed by the University, with a copy given to their line manager.

8. Managing Information

The University will ensure that any information that relates to safeguarding is recognised as confidential, recorded and stored securely and in accordance with the University's policies on Data Protection and Confidentiality. However, it should be noted that the law permits disclosure of the confidential information necessary to safeguard the interests of children and vulnerable adults.

Staff (and others who are necessarily privy to such information) will, therefore, ensure that information relating to actual, suspected or alleged abuse of children and vulnerable adults is treated with the utmost care and that no one is given more information than is necessary to protect the child/vulnerable adult concerned. The Designated Senior Manager will determine what information can be shared and to whom.

9. Allegation management

The University has a procedure in place for dealing with allegations against staff or students who work or otherwise come into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. This procedure has been designed to ensure the protection of a child or vulnerable adult from abuse whilst recognising the need to protect staff and students from unsupported or false allegations.

If anyone (staff, students or member of the public) has concerns over a child/vulnerable adult or a child/vulnerable adult confides in a member of staff in relation to another member of staff's or student's actions, they should:

- Report this immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will obtain any notes of the allegation from the member of staff or student.
- If the allegation is about or there are concerns about a student then the DSL should complete an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 1).
- The DSL will report this allegation and provide a copy of the Incident Report Form to the Director of Student Services.
- The DSL will, where appropriate, notify the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day of the allegation being made.

Where the allegation concerns a member of staff, the Head of School/Function and HR must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

An appropriate investigation will be carried out in accordance with the University's HR disciplinary procedure for staff or the University's Student Discipline and/or Fitness to Practice procedure for students. The investigation may lead to a referral of the case to the police or other services and other action as appropriate.

The individual against whom the claim has been made will be able to access support from HR, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health and/or Student Wellbeing Services as appropriate.

Notification to carers/guardians/parents of the person that the allegation involves will be undertaken in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Concerns that staff or students may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism should be raised under the Prevent Policy Statement (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff/values-and-behaviours/prevent-policy.aspx>). This means that concerns should be raised with the Security Services Manager (or, in their absence, the Director of Campus Services) or by emailing prevent@reading.ac.uk.

Guidance to staff

When dealing directly with a child/vulnerable adult you should:

- stay calm and listen to the individual's concerns;
- treat the person with respect and provide reassurance that it is safe to have the discussion;
- allow the individual to speak without disruption;
- keep a record of the concern using the person's own words as far as possible;
- do not promise confidentiality;
- explain to the individual that the information may need to be passed on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead; and
- pass on the information promptly and directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead

Things not to do:

- dismiss the concern or think it is someone else's responsibility;
- ask leading questions when the person is disclosing to you;
- express shock or anger or laugh;
- delay reporting the suspected or confirmed abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; or
- carry out an investigation into the allegation.

10. Staff Conduct and good practice

Any University staff or students working with children and/or vulnerable adults whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity will be expected to be compliant in the following:

1. **Staff members are expected to act responsibly and maintain a professional manner at all times, ensuring that behaviour, language, gestures, and dress code are appropriate.**
2. **Situations where there is only one staff member present with a child or vulnerable adult should be avoided. On the occasions when a one to one interview or meeting is necessary, these should be conducted in a room where the exit is clearly visible and where possible, the door to the room is left open.**
3. **Staff must not share personal contact details with children and vulnerable adults or take photos of children/vulnerable adults unless asked to do so by a member of staff for project purposes.**
4. **If it is necessary to contact a child or vulnerable adult, use university email (or another official, rather than personal, means of communication). Using social media is never an appropriate communication method, however, issues raised via or observed on social media must be dealt with under this policy.**
5. **Staff will be expected to maintain professional boundaries at all times. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and students under the age of 18 are an abuse of trust which may constitute a criminal offence. Staff and student relationships are discouraged by the University. Staff should speak to their Head of School or Function or their HR Partner for further advice.**
6. **Physical contact should be avoided. Staff should be aware of personal space and should avoid using gestures such as regularly putting a hand on the shoulder or arm. Whilst these gestures may be well intentioned, such acts could be misinterpreted. In situations where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child or vulnerable adult in order to prevent self-injury or injury to others, security should be called to deal with the situation.**
7. **Respect a child's or vulnerable adults right to personal privacy, while recognising that an agreement not to pass on information or to keep secrets must never be made with children or adults at risk.**
8. **Only trained first aiders should administer First Aid. Staff should follow University First Aid procedures as highlighted on First Aid notices.**
9. **Staff will be required to follow Health and Safety procedures and should not put themselves or students in any unnecessary danger.**

Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date
The University Secretary	Annually	UEB	27 June 2016
The University Secretary	3 years	UEB	29 June 2020

APPENDIX 1

STUDENT AND APPLICANT SERVICES 10.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults – Incident Report Form

Details of the person reporting the incident :	
Name:	
Telephone Number:	
Position:	
Name of child/vulnerable adult:	
Name of parent/carer:	
Home address:	
Contact phone number:	
Have the parents/carer been contacted?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Please give details:	
Date(s) and time(s) of any incident(s):	

Your observations (for instance are there any physical/behavioural signs or indirect signs):

Has the child/vulnerable adult been spoken to? If so please record exactly what was said (using the individual's own language) and what you said to the individual. (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Details of the alleged/suspected abuser (if known):

Name:

Position:

Address

Please provide any other details that you feel are important:

External agencies (for instance the police or social services) contacted in an emergency:

Name and telephone number of contact:

Name and telephone number of contact:

Action Agreed

Action Agreed

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information provided is correct and I will be available to answer any further questions on this matter:

Signature:

Print name:

Designated Safeguarding Lead to report allegation and provide a copy of the form to the Director of Student Services