



Child Protection Policy

Varndean College Policies and Procedures

Policy Statement

- At Varndean College we strive to be a place where students, staff, parents and visitors will be made welcome and comfortable and where we will treat each other with respect.
- We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from neglect and abuse and that their welfare is of paramount importance.
- Varndean College is a place where learning and personal development takes place in a climate of trust and confidence and where we value everyone's unique contribution to our community.
- All staff and volunteers who work at the college have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.
- All staff and volunteers have a duty to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and to pass on these concerns to the designated person
- All staff and governors at the college have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe and protected and have a duty to ensure that if there are any concerns relating to the welfare or safety of a child or young person, the child protection procedures are followed and the information is passed to the designated person. Where concerns continue any individual member of staff can press for the situation to be reassessed or refer their concerns directly to social services.
- All staff are made aware of their responsibility to read and adhere to the summary documents, available on the staff intranet: Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE September 2016 and future up-dates), Working together to safeguard children (June 2015), The Prevent Duty and Safeguarding for Further Education (further information and training module).
- We believe in raising awareness of child protection issues and to equipping students with the skills needed to keep themselves safe
- We are committed to developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse through training and professional development of staff.
- We recognise our responsibility to support students who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- We will always try to work in partnership with families but in any conflict between the needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and those of parents/carers or professionals, the needs of the young person must come first
- We are committed to safe recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that all staff and volunteers have been appropriately screened prior to appointment.
- We are committed to training our staff so that they are able to recognise and act appropriately on safeguarding concerns and signs of abuse.
- We ensure that training is provided to all staff on induction and receive

- up-dates at least annually.
- We maintain a central register of staff child protection training
- The governing body receive an annual report reviewing how the above duties have been discharged.

1 Context

The Children's Act 1989 and Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires all Local Authorities and colleges to:

- Take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child or young person who is suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm'.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of any child who is 'need'.

There are two parts to safeguarding:

- A duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- A duty to prevent impairment

Promoting welfare means:

- Creating opportunities to enable children to have optimum life chances

Significant Harm means:

- The concept of Significant Harm introduced by the Children's Act 1989 is the threshold by which compulsory intervention by the Children's Services may take place. Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health means physical or mental health; and ill treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

Further Education colleges and providers of adult, community and work-based learning in England are required by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to secure the safety of children; young people and vulnerable adults who are their learners.

Most recently, Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE September 2018) provides a summary of staff's statutory obligations and duties and specifically includes the duty to respond to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Peer on Peer abuse, trafficking and the risk of a young person being radicalised or drawn into extremist groups. It also makes clear the duty of individual members of staff to report their concerns.

The Child Protection Policy combines with the college's Safeguarding Policy and other related policies to meet our statutory duties and aims to reflect good practice in line with current directives.

2 Designated Person

- All schools and colleges are required to have a senior member of staff with responsibility for implementing the Child Protection Policy. In our College, the designated member of staff with child protection responsibility is Donna-Marie Janson Vice Principal. Her named deputy is Jen Neal (from September 2019). The designated person and deputy along with Heads of School constitute the Child Protection Team.
- As Designated Person, Donna-Marie Janson will receive regular child protection training and will make sure that all staff and volunteers know how to recognise and report any concerns or indications that a child is or has been neglected or abused.
- The Designated Person will provide an overview to the governing body annually regarding the number, nature and outcomes of referrals made.
- The Designated Person will lead the safeguarding team and discuss issues with individuals in the team about contact with Brighton and Hove Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Front Door for Families) and other appropriate external safeguarding teams, Prevent coordination team or the police and will make sure that the College follows child protection procedures and contributes fully to the child protection process.
- The Designated Person will be responsible for ensuring the central record of child protection training and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks is kept up to date.
- The Designated Person and Deputy will undergo training with the LSCB in line with statutory guidance.
- To ensure, through their day-to-day contact with young people, all staff members are aware that they have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring those concerns to the appropriate investigative agencies.

3 Governance

- It is the responsibility of Varndean College Corporation to ensure that the College has a Child Protection Policy and meets its statutory duties with regard to child protection.

The College's nominated governor is Katharine Travis. The role of the nominated governor is to ensure that the college has effective policies in place; that there are locally agreed procedures and that the policy and structures for safeguarding children are reviewed annually.

4 Definitions

Abuse

'An abused child is any young person, under 18 years of age, who has suffered from, or is believed likely to be at risk or significant risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.'

Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person, who has attained the age of 18, and:

- is receiving any form of health care
- is receiving a service or participating in an activity which is specifically targeted at people with age-related needs, disabilities or prescribed physical or mental health conditions or expectant or nursing mothers living in residential care
- age related needs includes needs associated with frailty, illness, disability or mental capacity

Categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse: non accidental injuries, bruising, wounding burns, fractures. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is included in this category.

Neglect: the chronic inattention to basic needs.

Sexual abuse: the involvement of children, young people and vulnerable adults in sexual activities, this includes the abuse of a position of trust by an adult with professional responsibility to a young person. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is included in this category

Emotional abuse or neglect: persistent emotional ill treatment such as the extreme denial of love, affection or approval. Forced marriage is also included in this category

It is more difficult to categorise radicalisation as it can potentially involve emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse.

5 Procedure – action to be taken

All staff at Varndean College have a duty to:

- Understand the Child Protection Policy of the college and follow the procedures whenever there is suspicion, allegation or disclosure relating to child abuse
- Understand what constitutes abuse
- Be aware of physical and emotional signs of abuse including the risk factors for FGM and radicalisation
- Report any suspicion, allegation or disclosure that a young person or vulnerable adult is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm to the Designated Person. The young person in question might be a student at Varndean College but he/she might also be reporting concerns about a younger sibling. NB Any member of staff can report a concern directly to social services
- Attend child protection training on joining the College and update their child protection training regularly
- Use the protocols set out in the Child Protection Procedures at the end of this policy

Disclosures

Sometimes concerns that a child; young person or vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to be suffering some form of abuse will build up slowly over time, and some will be as a response to a child; young person or vulnerable adult presenting an injury or mark or talking about a worrying issue. All concerns should be logged or recorded, preferably using the referral form at appendix 3 and referred to the Designated Person, who will provide support and guidance and, if appropriate, will make a referral to the MASH (Front Door for Families) or Social Services team in the area where the student resides.

The Designated Person may see the student and assess the immediate situation. A decision will then be made by the designated member of staff/child protection team. At every stage these staff will need to work with the co-operation and consent of the student where possible and in relation to a judgement of the levels of risk. The Designated Person may make contact with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or other appropriate organization. This will be backed up in written form. The Designated Person will then be instructed further on what will happen next.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team

The Head of Additional support acts as deputy to the designated person. Other designated staff with responsibility for child protection issues are the Heads of School. This team:

- report to the designated person or deputy.
- will know how to make an appropriate referral

- will be available to provide support and advice to staff on issues of child protection
- have received training from the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- will be involved in discussions on judgements
- will act as deputies in the absence of the designated person and the named deputy
- will attend case conferences and review meetings as appropriate

Allegations about members of staff

For allegations or disclosures that relate to a member of Varndean College, staff the same procedure should be followed. The Designated Person will report immediately to the Principal and will take such steps as are necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the young person in question and any other young people who might be at risk.

The Principal and Designated Person will take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and decide whether the allegation should be passed on to the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and/or the National College for Teaching and Leadership. The member of staff will not be informed until this has been agreed with the LADO.

The Public Interest Disclosure “Whistleblowing” Policy allows all staff to refer allegations without fear of reprisal. See related policies and all staff can refer directly to the local MASH.

Information sharing

At Varndean College we share information with parents and partner agencies to:

- support early intervention to help young people and families who need additional services to achieve positive outcomes.
- ensure we fulfil our duty to safeguard children and promote their welfare

We may also share information in response to requests from police or social services for information we may hold which may assist them in their duty to safeguard young people from significant harm or the risk of significant harm. Requests for such information should be made to the Designated or Deputy Designated Person.

The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information, but is in place to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

At Varndean College we ensure we share information both professionally and lawfully. (Child Protection Procedures)

Record Keeping

The Data Protection Act states that personal information held by agencies must be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully and stored securely. It must be accurate, proportionate to the purpose, not held longer than necessary and may only be disclosed in appropriate circumstances.

Record keeping is an important aspect of our college life; staff records on all areas of student welfare and attainment is made clear to students through our Data Protection statement which they sign.

Where concerns arise about the safety or wellbeing of a student, or there are indications that the student may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, staff will record:

- The reason for the concern
- What was said or witnessed and details of any other persons present
- Dates and times of incidents and when the notes were made
- Time and dates of any discussions with the student, parent/carer
- Time and dates of outcome of discussions with Heads of School, social workers or other relevant professionals.

Information forwarded as reports to the Designated Person are contained in a locked cabinet and/or in a secure and limited access section of the Student Tracking System.

These records form evidence and may be used in the child protection referral and any subsequent investigation or legal proceedings, they are exempt from the open file regulations and do not have to be made available to parents or carers requesting access to the student's file.

Unless to do so would put a young person at significant risk, parents and carers may be made aware of concerns. Good practice and partnership working dictates that if anything is significant enough to be recorded it should be discussed with parents/carers unless the student is over 18 or unless this increases the risks for the child, young person or vulnerable adult or damages the potential for the collection of evidence.

Related Policies

We will develop and evaluate all College policies with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our students. We will take account of the principles outlined in this policy and ensure that all other policies and procedures support the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm or neglect, in particular through:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Child Protection procedures appendix 2
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Student Contract
- Equality Duty
- Health and Safety Policy
- IT Conditions of Use Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Student Support Policy
- Substance Mis-use Policy
- Trips and Visits Policy
- Visiting Speakers Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy

Special Circumstances

We recognise that young people with special needs are more vulnerable to abuse and may be less able to tell people about abuse happening to them. For these reasons, it is essential that rigorous child protection procedures are in place with clear guidelines setting out acceptable behaviour by those working with children with disabilities. Support for young people for whom English is an additional Language and Children in Care also require extra consideration.

Varndean College Child Protection Procedures

Responding to Those at Risk

If you have any concerns about the welfare or well-being of a student, you need to act. In your role as a member of staff at Varndean College, you only have to take the first step. You do not have to solve the student's problems or report issues to outside agencies.

There are 3 Simple things you need to do:

Respond Reassure Report

Each member of staff has a duty to respond

- to a student in need or at risk of significant harm
- if they are concerned that a student may be in need or at risk of significant harm.

Set out below are the College's expectations of you should a student make a disclosure to you or if you suspect a student may be vulnerable or at risk.

As a member of staff you are not expected to make decisions about, or to make, a referral beyond College. Your role is to respond to the immediate situation and to pass on the information to the Designated Person or Deputy, recording your concern. Where a concern arises over time your role is to record and pass on your concerns.

When to respond:

- If you are worried about the behaviour of a colleague
- If someone tells you they are being abused
- If someone tells you they have been sexually assaulted
- If someone expresses suicidal thoughts
- When a series of incidents leads you to suspect that a student is being neglected or harmed
- If you notice a student is in great distress
- If a student is behaving in a way that could cause themselves harm

1 Action to be taken in the event of a disclosure:

Support the student

- Take seriously and respond sensitively to any disclosures of abuse (being aware of cultural and/or special educational needs).
- Listen carefully and non-judgmentally
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Say early on that you will have to speak to someone else who can help

- Do not attempt to limit or to describe the likely outcomes.
- Limit questions to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged probing or leading questions should not be used.
- Do not express shock; horror or disbelief.
- Stay within your own competence

Establish the immediate safety needs of the student

- Encourage the student to stay on site if you have safety concerns and, in some circumstances, you may need to ensure that someone is with the student

Do not promise confidentiality

- Never give any pledge of complete confidentiality and always explain that, in confidence, you may need to talk to a trusted colleague.
- Gain the student's consent where possible.
- explain your need for further professional support from a lead professional and pass concerns on to the designated teacher.

Record brief and accurate details

- the nature of the disclosure or allegations made
- make no judgements or comments in relation to the facts or the personal situation
- Use the student's own words wherever possible
- include date and time and full name of the student
- include your name and signature

Report the information quickly

- where possible, involve the student so that they are fully informed.
- Ensure that the student has a high level of privacy and afterwards seek support.
- If the designated person or deputy is unavailable, contact one of the Heads of School, who make up the Child Protection Team.
- You will need to pass on your record, preferably using a Student Referral Form at the end of this document.
- All such reports will be kept securely, separate from the main student file, and in locked locations.
- The Designated Person or the Deputy will inform the Principal as necessary.

The Designated Person will aim to co-operate with the student at each stage of the process and will be able to give advice and guidance to the member of staff making the referral on what he/she should do following a referral of concerns or a disclosure. Debriefing and support will be available. The member of staff will be kept informed as deemed necessary.

Referrals

The decision to refer to an outside agency will be taken by the Designated Person or the Deputy in consultation with at least one other member of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team. The decision whether to inform parents will be taken by the

Designated Person in consultation with other members of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team.

2 Action to be taken in the event of a disclosure involving a member of staff

Where a disclosure involves potential abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff, or where the behaviour of the member of staff has harmed or may have harmed a student, the referral should be made to the Designated Person or the Principal. They will refer to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for advice before taking any action or informing the member of staff.

3 In the event that a concern arises over time:

Information which has led to the concern should be passed on as for a disclosure using a Student Referral form. The report should include an account of how the concern has developed and whether the concerns have been discussed with the student.

Contact

Designated Person Donna-Marie Janson
Deputy Jen Neal

dmj@varndean.ac.uk ext 402
jln@varndean.ac.uk ext 426

- **Guiding Principles on information sharing (DfES 2006, Working together for Children, Young People and Families)** Explain to parents/carers openly at the outset what information will or could be shared, and why, and seek agreement, except where doing so puts the child/young person at risk of significant harm.
- The child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration when making decisions on whether to share information about them.
- Ensure information is accurate, up to date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those who need it and shared securely.
- When information is sought from us by Police or Social Services the Designated Person or Deputy will respond to formal requests by providing relevant reports or records. Where practicable we will share the reports with the young person.
- Seek advice when in doubt.
- Always record the reasons for decisions made.