

Keeping Safe: A Guide to safeguarding for students

We want to help keep you safe. This means reducing the risk of injury or accidents in college but it means more than this too. Everyone has the right to be properly looked after throughout their childhood so they can develop to their full potential as adults. Most of us are brought up by loving and caring parents or carers but some of us are not and may suffer as a result. Some of us may be unfortunate enough to come into contact with other adults who take advantage or abuse us. We may need support to stop these things happening, or to overcome the problems that such behaviour causes.

We have a responsibility to make sure you get the help you need if you are in this situation. This is called Safeguarding and this leaflet explains what we will do if you need help.

Safeguarding is the process of

- protecting children or vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect,
- preventing impairment of their health and development,
- ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, enabling them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

You may wonder what this has to do with you because you think of yourself as an adult. We aim to treat all learners as adults but for legal purposes anyone under the age of 18 is a child. Some of us are legally adult but may not be able to protect ourselves from exploitation or abuse and we may be called “vulnerable adults” and be equally in need of support.

- Under the terms of the Children Act, young people under the age of 18 are covered by the legislation and for the purposes of this procedure are referred to as children.
- A vulnerable adult is someone age 18 or over whose independence and well-being would be at risk if he/she did not receive appropriate health and social care support.

What do we mean by abuse?

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding,

drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm.

Emotional abuse is sustained emotional ill-treatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve being told that you are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as you meet the needs of another person. It may involve making you feel frightened or in danger, or you may be being exploited or corrupted. Bullying may also be classified as physical or emotional abuse. Witnessing acts of domestic violence may also be emotionally abusive.

Sexual Abuse is the involvement of children in sexual activities that they do not understand and to which they are unable to agree to. The activities may involve physical contact including sexual penetration or other acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Although sexual activity in itself is not an offence over the age of 16, young people under the age of 18 are still offered the protection of Child Protection Procedures under the Children Act 1989. Young people, of course, can still be subject to offences of rape and assault. Young people over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 are not deemed

able to give consent if the sexual activity is with an adult in a position of trust or a family member.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect you from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Self harm is when someone deliberately hurts or injures themselves and includes, cutting, burning, overdosing, scratching or tearing. Research suggests that self harm is not an indicator of risk of suicide. It can be described as a coping mechanism. People who do this are usually experiencing extreme distress. They are not usually attention seeking or mentally ill. Self harm may be indicative of other protection issues but it is of cause for concern in itself and therefore should be treated as an indicator that protection procedures should be instigated.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Students need to be suitably protected from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to the fundamental British Values, which are defined as Democracy, Rule of law, Individual liberty, Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Also included is calling for the death of members of the British armed forces. If you are worried that another student is vulnerable to being radicalised please contact Rowan Johnson, the lead Safeguarding Officer.

It's important to remember that anyone can experience abuse and anyone may be a perpetrator of abuse.

Sometimes the college environment is a good place where you may receive support and guidance, perhaps from a trusted teacher or tutor. You may feel safe enough to share information about something upsetting or bad that is happening or has happened to you. We want to reassure you that if you need to tell us something that:

1) we will take it seriously and 2) we have a reliable procedure for getting advice, support

and help for you. We don't claim that we can arrange everything you think you need or want but we'll do our best and we'll try to make sure you are supported.

What will happen next?

- The member of staff you talk to will check what you want to happen next,
- If you want help from social services or any other agency, they will make contact as soon as possible with one of our college safeguarding co-ordinators,
- They will pass on your concerns, the disclosure facts and any other details required, such as your date of birth, address and any other relevant details to the Coordinator,
- They can't promise complete confidentiality (to keep it secret) because the law says we have to share information if it is necessary to protect you but you will be kept informed about what will be shared and with whom.

Myth: Social services will automatically take children into care if they get an accusation of abuse. **Fact:** The law requires social workers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. Where possible this must be done while promoting the upbringing of children by their families.

Safeguarding Officers:

- Will make the decision about referral to social services child protection team, vulnerable adult protection and/or police,
- Will determine if any internal investigation or procedure should be followed,
- Will arrange for ongoing support for you,
- Will keep records centrally and securely.

Your Safeguarding Officers are:

Rowan Johnson: 01723 380772

r.johnson@s6f.org.uk

Adam Calcraft: 01723 380782

a.calcraft@s6f.org.uk

Jo Walker: 01723 380732

j.walker@s6f.org.uk

Sue Hawthornthwaite: 01723 390783

s.hawthornthwaite@s6f.org.uk