



University
Centre
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT POLICY

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers on or
after 1 June 2022

Signature

Principal and Chief Executive

Signature

Chair of Governing Body

Author: Director of Student Services
Approved by: SMT and Governors
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Section 1 Introduction

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and Further Education Colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with due regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy ensures that Bridgwater and Taunton College and University Centre Somerset (UCS) does so. University Centre Somerset activities take place in environments where under-18s are taught, and UCS students may engage with U18s in other ways, for example, through sports coaching or work in a childcare setting

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, including Senior Managers and Governors, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of this organisation.

This policy will be reviewed annually by SMT and Governors. It will be implemented through UCS and the College's induction and training programme, and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior Management team and Governors through staff performance measures and day to day practice.

At the time of the latest update to this policy, following an extended period of focus on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, including students working remotely and at home, new concerns have arisen about harassment and sexual misconduct in education (see section 10.4 below)

Section 2 Statutory Framework and official guidance

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, UCS and the College will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- The Education Act 2002 (Section 175/157)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE, September 2021)
- The OFS [Statement of Expectations](#) regarding harassment and sexual misconduct
- The [OFSTED review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) (June 2021)
- Section 26, The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- The General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The [Southwest Child Protection Procedures](#)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years. HM Government 2014
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Section 74, Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage

Section 3 Intent

We believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18, and of vulnerable students over the age of 18. The intent of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure that:

A safe learning environment is provided for children and vulnerable adults at all times, whether working on College premises or remotely.

UCS and the College will take every step possible to ensure the safety and safeguarding of apprentices, work experience students and other work-based learners.

UCS and the College are able to take appropriate action to protect young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; sexual harassment; bullying in all its forms; neglect; radicalisation; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; slavery; honour-based violence; sexual and criminal exploitation (this list is not exhaustive). Action will be taken whether or not the risk of harm occurs in the physical world or online, and whether it occurs in College or outside. Victims will never be given the impression they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or sexual harassment.

Safe recruitment practices check the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with or in proximity to children and vulnerable adults.

Staff and governors are trained to recognise the different types of harm and take appropriate action in line with College procedures and with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff are also made aware of their Duty of Care towards all learners irrespective of age and swift action is taken on the rare occasion when there seems to have been a breach or abuse of trust.

UCS and the College ensures that it regularly consults with learners (in student forums, surveys and induction) about how safe they feel and about their general welfare, and action is taken where learners tell us they do not feel safe.

UCS and the College takes steps to support and protect the most vulnerable learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and will support other organisations such as the police in the case of College students becoming missing children.

Section 175 places a duty of care on Local Education Authorities, and on governing bodies of schools and further education institutions to make arrangements for carrying out their functions with a view to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Keeping Children Safe in Education recognises that 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility... Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play'.

Bridgwater and Taunton College recognises its duty in this area and seeks to meet and exceed the welfare and safeguarding needs of children and vulnerable adults, as well as ensuring appropriate practices for staff recruitment and selection and providing a safe and secure environment in which to study.

Section 4 Scope

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all College staff (including temporary and agency staff), job applicants, students, apprentices, prospective students, volunteers and governors whether they work or study in the main College campuses (Bridgwater, Taunton and Cannington), from home, at outreach centres, or other designated areas.

The policy applies to apprentices, students on work experience placements (including those on work experience inside UCS and the College) and other work-based learning programmes, and those engaged on any College-organised off-site activity.

The policy applies to working arrangements with other agencies to support the UCS Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, including HEI partners, the Office for Students, local

education authorities, the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust, schools, support agencies, sub-contractors and employers.

Section 5 Keeping Children Safe in Education

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) is the key document from the Department of Education guiding our safeguarding practice, and is the document that underlies this policy. It is updated annually and **all staff should read Part One**, or Annex A if advised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL. Annex B also provides useful reference information about specific safeguarding concerns such as Forced Marriage, FGM or County Lines, for example.

Section 6 The Statement of Expectations

The Office for Students [Statement of Expectations](#) provides a set of consistent recommendations to support higher education providers in England to develop and implement effective systems, policies and processes to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct. See Section 10.1 for how UCS responds to the statement.

Section 7 Responsibilities

7.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Prevent is Mark Nettle, Director of Student Services. The DSL is a member of the Senior Management Team of UCS and the College and takes the lead responsibility for child protection for the organisation. The DSL is also UCS and the College's Single Point of Contact for Prevent and will oversee any referrals to the Channel programme.

The DSL will receive training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the SSCP (Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership) and will attend Somerset's Advanced Child Protection Update course every 2 years. The DSL will oversee the referral of alleged harm or abuse to Children's Social Care.

The DSL will ensure the Senior Management Team and Governors are aware of trends in behaviour, changes in guidance or legislation, or specific safeguarding incidents that might affect policy or practice.

The DSL is also responsible for ensuring that:

- Advice, support and regular updates are provided to staff on issues relating to safeguarding, sexual harassment, Prevent and online safety
- A proper record of any child protection or Channel referral, complaint or concern is maintained (even where that concern does not lead to a referral)
- Parents and carers of children and vulnerable adults within UCS and the College are aware of UCS and the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Every effort is made to be aware of Children Looked After enrolled in UCS and the College, and their social worker and virtual school head are known
- UCS and the College liaises with local authorities and the SSCP and other appropriate agencies
- UCS and the College liaises with feeder schools to ensure that records are shared where students join UCS and the College with safeguarding concerns or subject to a Child Protection Plan.

- UCS and the College liaises with employers and training organisations that receive children or vulnerable adults from UCS and the College on work experience and placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place
- Staff receive initial safeguarding training, and regular updates, and are aware of UCS and the College's safeguarding and child protection procedures, and of the principles of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- The College's Safeguarding Committee, which includes the link governor for Safeguarding meets as a minimum once per term and reviews progress against the annual Safeguarding Operating Plan.

The DSL will provide an annual report to the Governing Body of the College setting out how UCS and the College has discharged its duties and ensure completion of Somerset's Virtual Audit for Safeguarding.

7.2 The Safeguarding team

UCS and the College will appoint an appropriate number of Deputy DSLs (DDSL) and designated Safeguarding Officers to cover all campuses, ensuring that each College site has a designated officer present, and there are both male and female officers available. The DSL is responsible for keeping this list updated.

The current Safeguarding team is:

DSL

Mark Nettle, Director of Student Services
Tel **01278 441247**, email nettle@btc.ac.uk

Deputy DSLs

Louise Seymour, Head of Learner Journey (Bridgwater):
Tel **01278 441232**, email seymourl@btc.ac.uk

Keira Scott, Student Engagement Manager (Bridgwater):
Tel **01278 441267**, email scottk@btc.ac.uk

Helen Windsor, Student Engagement Manager (Taunton):
Tel **01823 366506**, email: windsorh@btc.ac.uk

Leesa Hayes, Student Engagement Manager (Cannington):
Tel **01278 445024**, email: hayesl@btc.ac.uk

DDSL with responsibility for safeguarding High Needs learners:
Siobhan Gallagher, Head of ALS (Bridgwater)
Tel **01278 441856**, email gallaghers@btc.ac.uk

Safeguarding Officers

Eve Watt, Head of Student Services (Bridgwater)
watte@btc.ac.uk

Sue Marson, Student Funding Manager (Bridgwater)
marsons@btc.ac.uk

Helen Carpenter, Wellbeing Officer (Taunton)
carpenterh@btc.ac.uk

Charlotte Wade, Residential Manager (Cannington)
wadec@btc.ac.uk

Note that if a situation arises in which none of the Safeguarding Officers are available, any staff member can make a referral to children's social care. Somerset Children's Social Care can be contacted on **0845 345 9122**. There is also a consultation line for professionals (DSL / Deputy DSLs: **0300 123 3078**).

Outside normal term time, the DSL will ensure appropriate availability of the Safeguarding Team for the level and type of activity taking place, and communicate arrangements to staff. Where reasonably possible, UCS and the College will seek to hold more than one emergency contact for under-18 students in case of emergencies or welfare concerns, and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Appropriate training and support will be provided to enable the designated staff to fulfil their role. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same level as the DSL. Safeguarding Officers:

- Report to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility
- Are trained to make appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care, and Channel referrals under the Prevent Duty
- Will be available to advise and support other staff on issues relating to safeguarding and Prevent
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to children and young people studying at UCS and the College
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate
- Will work together to share best practice in safeguarding
- Have received training in safeguarding issues and inter-agency working, as required by the SSCP and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.

7.3 The Board of Governors

The Governors have strategic responsibility for Safeguarding at UCS and the College and ensure compliance with legislation and with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Governors will ensure a Senior postholder holds the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this person is trained to an appropriate level and has regular update training.

Governors should ensure there is a 'whole College' approach to Safeguarding that has the interests of children and young people at heart, and that all staff understand College policy in this area and have read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One.

A link governor for Safeguarding, with appropriate knowledge and skills, will attend Safeguarding Committee meetings on behalf of the Board and provide direct oversight and scrutiny of Safeguarding arrangements.

An effective Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be in place and governors will review and approve this policy and ensure it is understood by staff.

Governors will ensure that UCS and the College have robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent those who are unsuitable to work with children from gaining employment at UCS and the College.

7.4 All staff

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff, and staff should be able to identify concerns early and make the appropriate response. Staff have responsibility for ensuring there is a safe environment for learners wherever they work.

If there are any concerns about the welfare of a young person, or disclosure or suspicion of abuse, all staff should know how to respond and who to contact (see Sections 9.1 and 6.2). Staff should ensure they never make a young person feel ashamed that they have disclosed abuse or harassment.

All staff should be aware of the principles and processes described in this policy and have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 (or Annex A where appropriate) and the annual updates to that document.

All staff will attend Safeguarding Training at induction and safeguarding related training in each year of employment with BTC (see section 8.4 below)

Section 8 Students

8.1 All students

All students, whatever their personal, familial and social circumstances have the potential to be victims of abuse or harassment and staff should be vigilant to this possibility.

UCS and the College will ensure that students know how to report harassment, abuse or welfare concerns, whether taking place on College premises or externally, and whether historic or current. Students who do so will be supported and will not be made to feel ashamed or embarrassed, nor have fears of retribution.

Students will be given advice on how to protect themselves from harassment and abuse both face to face and online.

8.2 Vulnerable learners

UCS seeks to support vulnerable and underrepresented learners pre-entry and during their studies via its Access and Participation Plan. These plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

UCS staff should also be generally alert to the potential need to provide help for young people who are more vulnerable. For example, young people:

- with a disability and/or specific additional needs
- with special educational needs
- who are looked after or are acting as a young carer
- who are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour especially if there is a concern that it is exploitative
- missing education
- whose family circumstances present challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health or learning disability, domestic violence
- with poor attendance or high medical absence
- whose poor mental health may be an indicator of abuse
- suffering peer on peer abuse
- who are privately fostered
- who are services children, who may have had interrupted or constantly changing schooling.

Such learners will be identified through application, interview and enrolment procedures and on-course interventions.

8.3 Young people with SEN and disabilities

There is a concern sometimes that, for young people with SEN and disabilities, that their SEN or disability needs are seen first, and the potential for abuse second. If a young person is behaving in particular ways, or looking distressed, or their behaviour or demeanour is different from in the past, staff should think about that being a sign of the potential for abuse, and not simply see it as part of their disability or their special educational needs.

Young people with SEND have a higher risk of being left out, of being isolated from their peers, and are disproportionately affected by bullying. UCS and the College will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are able to participate in all areas of College life.

8.4 Younger Children on College Premises

UCS and the College has a duty of care towards young people who are studying on a school link programme whilst on College premises. In arranging school link programmes for young people of compulsory school age UCS and the College will:

- Work with the school to ensure consent is gained from link students and their parents / carers to take part
- Seek to ensure that for young people with special education needs (SEN), UCS and the College is informed of the level of support needed
- Request details from the school of any medical needs or requirements a young person may have
- Ensure that young people are made aware of the general standards of safety with which all young people and FE college students should comply and be identifiable on site.

Concerns regarding safeguarding or Prevent for young people on school link programmes must be referred to the Child Protection Officer at the school where the child is on roll (or the child's social worker if the child is not on a school roll), and to the relevant College Safeguarding Officer if other College students or staff are involved or affected.

Similar arrangements will be made to ensure the safety of children visiting UCS and the College for Taster Days and other events.

Staff may not bring their children onto the premises for any reason other than brief visits. However, if a child does attend College premises, the parent/legal guardian will remain responsible for the child at all times and will be required to keep him/her away from all hazardous areas. There may be exceptions to this for purposes such as work experience.

8.5 Arrangements in the Childcare Centre, Bridgwater Campus

Childcare Centre staff undergo appropriate Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent training and are DBS checked when employment with UCS and the College commences, in line with UCS and the College's Safer Recruitment procedures.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is the over-arching Policy for UCS and the College. In addition, the Childcare Centre has its own Child Protection Procedures. These will be reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect changes to this Policy.

8.6 Communication with parents and carers

UCS and the College will ensure that parents/carers are aware of the responsibilities placed on UCS and the College and its staff for safeguarding young people, and will ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on UCS and the College websites.

Parents and carers of under-18 students should be informed about Safeguarding concerns or referrals to Children's Social Care, unless it is considered that doing so might place the young person at increased risk of significant harm, for example where the parent / carer is an abuser or complicit in the abuse.

Section 9 Staff

9.1 Safer recruitment

UCS and the College will ensure that there are appropriate staff with safer recruitment training to carry out interviews, and that safer recruitment practices are followed. We will maintain a single central record to ensure all statutory requirements. All references will be verified and recorded.

Recruitment procedures will reflect the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Three and will aim to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children.

UCS and the College will ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff, governors and volunteers who have substantial access to children and vulnerable adults, including enhanced DBS checks, and that a single central record is kept of such checks. This process is detailed further in the DBS and Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy and Procedure.

On the rare occasions when an individual starts work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, HR will ensure other recruitment checks have been carried out and that a full risk assessment is undertaken. The individual will be appropriately supervised and not left alone with young people until the DBS is obtained.

Staff who have been employed by UCS and the College for more than a year will complete an annual declaration to state any new convictions or barring, and to check their ongoing awareness of Safeguarding.

Full details of Safe Recruitment procedures are described in the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.

9.2 Allegations involving staff

Definitions

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff, a governor or a volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This applies to any child the member of staff/governor/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.

In UCS and the College setting, consideration should also be given to cases in which an adult member of staff is alleged to have committed a sexual or physical assault on another adult – and whether this constitutes a risk to the young people the alleged has access to.

Raising Concerns

All College staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in UCS and the College's safeguarding arrangements without prejudice or fear of retaliation. For more information, see UCS and the College's Whistleblowing Policy.

An NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285, or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the Principal. Where there are concerns about the Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors via the Governance Professional. If a member of staff is the victim of abuse, that person is advised to contact the police as well as seeking support in College.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with UCS and the College, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, allegations should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and if appropriate make any referral via them (see Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Four).

See Annex 2 for further information about managing and investigating allegations against staff

9.3 Safer working practices

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff will be made be aware of safer working practice, through induction and training, and from guidance contained in the Staff Handbook, Recruitment and Selection Policy, and the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

UCS and the College will ensure guidance is provided for situations where particular care is needed, for example, for off-site trips and residentials, or when providing intimate care, or when students request specific or personal help from staff.

9.4 Staff training and development

UCS and the College will provide regular Safeguarding training for all staff and governors. The training will be available in a variety of formats, address a range of Safeguarding, online safety and Prevent-related topics, and ensure awareness is updated annually.

A Safeguarding and Prevent briefing is included within the induction programme for new staff, and all new staff will be expected to complete the online 'Safeguarding Essentials' module within a month of starting employment, and attend UCS and the College's own Safeguarding training within the 6-month probation period. Managers will be asked not to confirm new staff in post if staff have not attended such training within those timescales. In addition, all staff and governors will be asked to read, and confirm they have read, the latest edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1.

After the first year of employment, all staff will be expected to undertake a minimum of one Safeguarding or Prevent-related training in each year of employment. This can include (the list is not exhaustive):

- UCS and the College's own Safeguarding training
- Sexual harassment awareness / prevention training
- Prevent or Extremism training
- Online safety

Other internal or external courses/events that qualify include:

- Attendance at a Safeguarding update briefing at a College Training Day or Staff Conference
- The Somerset Safeguarding training (levels 1 – 3)
- Courses or workshops on:
 - Domestic Violence
 - Sexual harassment
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
 - Drugs and substance misuse
 - Relationship / peer to peer abuse
 - Terrorist incident training
 - A revisit to Safeguarding Essentials, especially when this is updated.

At appraisal line managers will discuss with staff that year's Safeguarding or Prevent-related training, record this on the appraisal form, and support staff to book onto, and complete, training if this has not been achieved by the time of the appraisal.

Section 10 Procedures

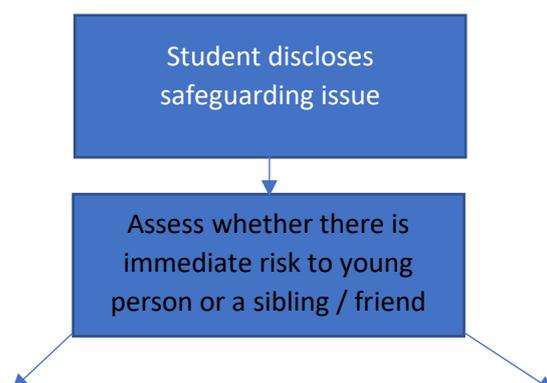
10.1 Disclosure and Referral

Staff referrals

If a student discloses harassment or abuse to a member of staff, the member of staff should reassure the young person that they have done the right thing, and assess whether there is immediate risk to the young person or, for example, a sibling. It is vital not to give the student the impression that they are nuisance or that it is a problem that they have disclosed. Inform the DSL or a DDSL as quickly as possible, who will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services. If it is decided to make a request for involvement to Children's Services this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

While it is the DSL / DDSL's role to make request for involvement, any staff member can make a referral to Children's Services. If a young person is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the DSL / DDSL, the DSL must be informed as soon as possible.

Safeguarding referral flowchart for all staff





Where the member of staff records information relating to a concern, this should be done on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. Attention must also be paid to the attendance and development of any young person about whom UCS and the College has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan, and a written record will be kept and attendance procedures followed.

If the young person's whereabouts are unknown, or they move to elective home education the Social Worker must be informed and the setting follow the procedure for reporting children missing from education and elective home education.

When a member of staff discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, or there is a risk this might occur, the teacher must report this to the police and should talk to the DSL or a DDSL immediately. This is a mandatory reporting duty. See Keeping Children Safe in Education: Annex B for further details.

Student referrals

If you are a student and wish to make a Safeguarding referral, talk to any trusted member of staff at UCS, or call 01278 441247 for the DSL office, or email staysafe@btc.ac.uk.

10.2 Record keeping

When a young person has made a disclosure, the member of staff receiving this should:

- Record the conversation as soon as possible
- Keep the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, witness, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Indicate the position of any injuries
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- Agree and record actions and outcomes.

All records need to be given to the DSL or DDSL promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005.

The DSL or DDSL will record the safeguarding disclosure on the online 'MyConcern' system and assign an 'owner' to follow up the concern.

If a young person who is/ or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes provision, the DSL / DDSL will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the DSL at the receiving provision in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.

Child protection records will be scrutinised regularly by the Safeguarding Team to ensure the actions and outcomes have been carried out and any drift avoided.

10.3 Confidentiality

Safeguarding and protecting young people raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff.

If a young person discloses to a member of staff and asks that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the young person, clearly and sensitively, that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other staff to help keep the young person safe.

In this situation refer as quickly as possible to the DSL or a DDSL.

10.4 Site safety

General approaches

All staff have a responsibility to ensure UCS and the College provides a safe environment for students, and all staff should be vigilant to intruders and any risk of harm to young people. Specific actions UCS and the College will take include:

Maintaining suitable and reasonable physical boundaries and barriers such as fencing, gates and locks on doors, limiting site access and channelling visitors to Reception areas

Ensuring all legitimate users of UCS and the College can be recognised by an ID card and lanyard, or by a visitor badge

Continuing the rollout of ID card operated external doors as funds and building projects allow

Asking contractors, visitors and volunteers using the premises to sign in at Reception, understand UCS and the College's approach to Safeguarding, and wear a visitor's badge or lanyard. Where a member of staff from partner organisations visits regularly, a Senior Manager can approve a College lanyard and freer access to particular areas of UCS and the College. The individual will be asked for a recent or new DBS clearance.

Ensuring risk assessments are in place for hazardous areas used by young people as part of their curriculum or enrichment

Carrying out, and maintaining records of, Fire Drills, operate an effective First Aid service, and ensure steps are taken to minimise the transmission of viruses such as COVID-19.

Ensuring access to harmful online material is prevented on College systems (see the Online Safety Policy).

Run-hide-tell

In the light of the concern that UCS and the College might be perceived of as a potential target for a terrorist attack, UCS and the College will promote the **run-hide-tell** response to students

and staff, and ensure a control group is identified who can coordinate actions taken and communication in the event of an attack.

Possession of knives and other weapons

The law states that it is illegal to:

- sell a knife to anyone under 18, unless it has a folding blade 3 inches long (7.62 cm) or less
- carry a knife in public without good reason, unless it has a folding blade with a cutting edge 3 inches long or less
- carry, buy or sell any type of banned knife
- use any knife in a threatening way (even a legal knife)

<https://www.gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives>

In practice students should not be carrying knives on campus or between locations, even if they are used during lessons such as catering or horticulture. If you suspect a student is carrying a knife, ensure two members of staff are present, then ask the student if they are carrying a knife, and ask to search any bag or turn out pockets. If the request is refused, tell them that we have no option but to contact the police. If they agree, and the knife is offered up, take this to the DSL or a Student Engagement Manager who will either:

- if it is a legal knife, keep it safely until they go home, asking them not to bring it onto campus again
- if it is a banned weapon (see the list at the link above), it will be confiscated, and the police contacted and disciplinary action taken.

A similar approach should be adopted where possession of other weapons is suspected. Staff should always make the safety of themselves and other students and staff a priority.

10.5 Home stays

Enhanced DBS checks will be carried out on host families providing residential accommodation for under-18 College students. UCS and the College will also carry out an enhanced DBS check for other residents in the host family home aged 16 or over.

10.6 Students requiring hospital treatment

If a student requires to be taken to hospital by ambulance from UCS or the College, staff should contact parents / carers / other family members and stress that UCS and the College will not be able to accompany the young person to, or at, the hospital. There may be exceptions to this approach, for example in the case of residential students for whom parents / carers may be distant.

10.7 Arrangements in the Childcare Centre

Childcare Centre staff undergo appropriate Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent training and are DBS checked when employment with UCS and the College commences, in line with UCS and the College's Safer Recruitment procedures.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is the over-arching Policy for UCS and the College. In addition, the Childcare Centre has its own Child Protection Procedures. These will be reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect changes to this Policy.

10.8 Work based learning

Staff who arrange, vet and monitor work experience placements and work-based or workplace learning will undertake appropriate safeguarding training.

Organisations who offer work experience placements or work-based/workplace learning for College students will be vetted for their suitability to do so. Work Experience Advisors will make employers aware of UCS and the College's approach to Safeguarding, and expectations that the employer will safeguard young people on placement.

When the assessment suggests that an employer does not have safeguarding and child protection policies, or awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues, or where there is any evidence of risks to a student's safety, UCS and the College will ensure that no students are placed with that employer until the DSL or a Deputy DSL has made an appropriate risk assessment and will meet the staff working on the arrangement to do this, and may also request a meeting with the employer. If an employer is deemed unsuitable for work experience placements or work-based / workplace learning for safeguarding reasons, UCS and the College will make the SSCP or police aware of this.

Children and vulnerable adults who are placed with employers will be given clear advice about whom to contact if they are worried or uncomfortable about the surroundings, or if they suffer abuse.

10.9 Early help

Children who may require early help will be offered early intervention through Early Help support services for families.

UCS and the College will ensure relevant staff are aware of the early help process, and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, including sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for young children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any ongoing/escalating concerns so that consideration can be given to a request for involvement to Children's Services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

A directory of early help services is available from the Early Help Advice Hub on 01823 355803. Somerset Choices and Professional Choices will also help practitioners and families find information and support to prevent escalation of needs and crisis.

Section 11 Current critical themes

11.1 Harassment and sexual misconduct

The [OFSTED Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#) identified the prevalence of abuse and harassment in schools and colleges, even where organisations and Local Safeguarding Partnerships had not identified a problem.

'90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot...92% of girls, and 74% of boys, said sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers'. OFSTED also observed that 'for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them'.

The Office for Students drew up its [Statement of Expectations](#) asking higher education providers in England to develop and implement effective systems, policies and processes to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct.

UCS and the College will respond robustly to these concerns and requirements, including:

- Raising the levels of understanding across the organisation of what constitutes sexual harassment and abuse, and ensuring that incidents are never dismissed as 'banter', or 'part of growing up'.
- Introducing training for staff to ensure they are aware of the prevalence of sexual harassment, are able to identify the signs, and know what to do in response.
- Ensuring students are aware that support is available for victims, and that disclosing abuse or harassment will never be seen as creating a problem.
- Making sure students and staff know that BTC will not tolerate sexual harassment and abuse.
- Including healthy relationships and consent topics in the tutorial curriculum.
- Recording incidents to understand better the prevalence of such behaviours within the organisation.
- Drawing up action plans to respond to the Statement of Expectations and to reflect the points above and monitoring this at Safeguarding Committee meetings.

11.2 Peer on peer abuse

UCS and the College recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. Peer on peer abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying and cyber-bullying
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships
- Physical abuse, including online abuse which threatens physical abuse
- Sexual harassment (see above) and sexual violence
- Upskirting
- Initiation / hazing type rituals

Staff training and the Tutorial programme for students, will seek to promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance, and staff will be trained to recognise the forms that peer abuse may take, such as those listed above, and how to respond to it.

UCS and the College's Student Disciplinary procedures will be invoked when peer abuse is recognised, and support offered to the victims of peer abuse.

11.3 Impact of the Coronavirus pandemic

The current and recent period has been dominated by the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In the event of any further lockdowns, closures or part-closures, UCS and the College will ensure that vulnerable students continue to be supported remotely, and are still able to disclose safeguarding concerns. Similarly staff will be informed of how to contact the Safeguarding team.

It is also noted that lockdowns and working from home may lead to domestic tensions and domestic violence and staff will be encouraged to be alert to signs of abuse or neglect among their learners.

The Online Safety Policy will detail precautions that should be taken by staff to avoid allegations when teaching remotely and staff will be provided reminders of these in the event of any further shifts to home learning.

11.4 Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE and CCE)

These are two forms of abuse of power where allows an adult or adults to manipulate a child into sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the child or their family wants or for apparent status. Trafficking and County Lines are common forms of CSE and CCE. Both girls and boys can be drawn into both types of exploitation but the indicators may be different for different genders, and may be hard to spot.

UCS and the College will work to support any victims of CSE or CCE and will work with police and other services wherever exploitation involving College students is discovered.

11.5 Extra-familial harms

Extra-familial harms refer to safeguarding incidents and behaviours that occur outside the family home. These may include (the list is not exhaustive):

- Sexual or criminal exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Serious Violence
- County Lines

UCS and the College will ensure that staff are aware of extra-familial harms and the risk factors associated with them.

11.6 Mental and emotional health

It is recognised that poor mental health may be an indicator that a young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. A young person's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. UCS and the College will seek to meet or exceed the requirements of the governments green paper 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' (December 2017), through the provision of mental health services and strong external partnerships, for example with CAMHS.

11.7 Counter-terrorism and the Prevent Duty

1. UCS and the College and University Centre Somerset will assess the risks of students and staff becoming terrorists or supporting terrorists via a regularly updated Prevent Action Plan which mitigates the risks.
2. A Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Prevent will be identified (the DSL / Director of Student Services), and staff made aware of the requirement to pass concerns to the SPOC, or in his absence, to any Safeguarding Officer.
3. Effective pastoral support (Wellbeing, Counselling, Safeguarding Officers) will increase the likelihood of Prevent concerns being recognised early on and allow appropriate action to be taken.
4. Staff will be trained how to identify possible radicalisation; who the SPOC is and where to take concerns; and made aware of regional, national and international radicalisation and counter-terrorism developments.
5. The SPOC will ensure that strong links exist with the Regional Coordinator for Prevent for the Southwest (also a Governor of Bridgwater and Taunton College) and that advice can be sought and Channel Referrals made.

6. UCS and the College will maintain a robust firewall as part of its IT Acceptable Use Policy and ensure sites promoting terrorism or giving information about weapons procurement or development cannot be accessed via College systems.
7. Users of the University Centre will be trained to follow the government's 'Run - Hide – Tell' response to any attack carried out on the Centre.
8. The Student Union and HE Student President will receive regular updates and asked to promote the University Centre Somerset approach to Prevent.

10.8 Affluent neglect

This refers to the neglect experienced by some young people in wealthy families. This can occur where there is over reliance on paid-for carers, long working hours of parents and / or the young person being placed in a boarding or residential settings against their wishes. Because of apparent material affluence, emotional neglect or abuse may be harder to spot than other types of neglect. UCS and the College will ensure staff are aware of Affluent Neglect and are able to respond appropriately.

Section 11 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be referred to in UCS and the College's corporate publications and available the UCS website.

UCS and the College's Safeguarding Committee, Senior Management Team and Governors will monitor and review this policy annually.

This policy should not be read in isolation and should be cross-referenced to other relevant College student and employment and policies and procedures, including:

- DBS and Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- The Staff Handbook
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Procedure
- Modern Slavery Policy
- Student Off-site Trips and Residentials Policy and Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Staff Social Media Policy

Annex 1 Definitions

Safeguarding:

- Protecting children (everyone under the age of 18) from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Taking action where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so
- Taking action to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk

Child Protection: Specific protection measures for a child suffering or at high risk of harm, usually undertaken by Children's Social Care e.g. a Child Protection Plan.

See Section 2 below for definitions of types of harm and abuse.

Children and young people are those aged under 18 years.

Vulnerable adults are those aged over 18 who may be considered vulnerable to abuse, for example those with learning difficulties or disability.

SSCP – Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Early help: Providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

Channel: A multi-agency approach which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Types of abuse:

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse causes harm to a person. It may involve hitting, shaking, cutting, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring. Physical abuse also includes a parent or carer fabricating illness in a child.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant. Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Young people may be forced to exchange sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse occurs where there is a persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

Annex 2 Managing allegations

Initial Actions

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words – including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Principal.

The recipient of an allegation must not make a judgement about its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Principal will not **investigate** the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will discuss with UCS and the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of HR whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

If the allegation meets any of the four criteria set out at the start of this section, contact should always be made with the LADO within one day of disclosure.

If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for safeguarding, this will take place in accordance with Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures.

College Investigations

The LADO may ask UCS and the College to investigate matters following its own HR procedures. In such instances, consideration should be given to:

- The gender mix of HR and other staff investigating (for example, ensuring a female member of staff interviews a female alleged victim)
- Offering internal or external pastoral support to the alleged victim at an early stage
- Keeping accurate, agreed and dated minutes of any investigation meetings.

The Principal/Chair of Governors should, as soon as possible following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer, ensure the subject of the allegation is informed. The DSL should share the outcome of UCS and the College investigation with the LADO and follow any further guidance the LADO provides, for example submitting a DBS referral if required.

For further information, see: SSCP's Allegations Management or contact Somerset Direct for a referral to the LADO: **Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224**.