

QUALITY CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Policy: Child Protection and Safeguarding

Date: September 2024

Approved by: Designated Safeguarding Lead

1.0 Introduction

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

Gloucestershire College embeds a whole College approach and is committed to safeguarding its students and staff. Safeguarding and vigilance are essential parts of the College community and culture, where safeguarding underpins policy development and college activity.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out intent and commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all learners and staff by outlining clear procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to safeguarding concerns.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all learners, staff, parent/carers, external professionals/partners, volunteers, tenants and any other adults who are involved with the College, ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are upheld across all areas.

2.0 Legislative Framework

Gloucestershire College takes seriously its responsibility to safeguarding and protect the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to full compliance with all statutory safeguarding guidance, ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices are in place to effectively protect children and vulnerable individuals from harm.

Under the **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024** legislation, the college has a legal duty to protect children from harm by implementing robust safeguarding measures, promoting a safe learning environment, and ensuring all staff are trained to identify and respond to signs of abuse or neglect.

It has a moral duty and statutory obligation under **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002** to all children and young people under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults who attend or are on the site (legitimately) for other reasons.

Gloucestershire College is also required to work with other agencies to protect children under the **Children Act 2004** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**.

Our duties include:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Work to provide an environment in which children, young people and vulnerable adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident that any complaint, allegation or suspicion of abuse will be taken seriously.
- Ensure that there are adequate procedures and arrangements within the college to identify, assess, make referrals and support children, young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering from harm.

- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies (e.g. Schools, Police, Social Care) to meet these obligations.
- Maintain a safe college environment, including online learning environments.
- Ensure robust safer recruitment processes ensure College staff are suitable to undertake duties.
- Provide clarity of support, appropriate resources and range of signposting to all learners.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children or young people is defined as protecting children or young people from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health or development; ensuring that children or young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children or young people to have the best outcomes.

3.2 Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, by others and online. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child/young person or children/young people (also known as child-on-child abuse).

Abuse can be:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse/harassment; and/or
- neglect.

3.3 Neglect

Neglect is a form of abuse where a person's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, education, and emotional support, are consistently ignored or unmet. It occurs when a caregiver fails to provide necessary care, leading to harm or potential harm to the individual's wellbeing, development, or safety. In the context of safeguarding, neglect is particularly harmful to children and vulnerable adults, as it can severely affect their physical and emotional health.

3.4 Exploitation

Exploitation refers to the unfair or harmful treatment of vulnerable individuals for personal gain, often through manipulation, coercion, or abuse of power. This can involve taking advantage of someone's vulnerability due to age, disability, mental health, or other factors, to use them for financial, sexual, labour, or emotional benefit.

Exploitation can take many forms, including:

- Sexual exploitation
- Financial exploitation
- Labor exploitation
- Emotional exploitation

3.5 Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups are individuals who may be at increased risk of harm, abuse, or exploitation due to factors such as age, disability, mental or physical health conditions, or social or economic circumstances. These groups often include children, the elderly, people with disabilities, those with mental health issues, or individuals facing social exclusion. In safeguarding, special attention is given to identifying and protecting members of these groups to ensure their safety and well-being.

4.0 Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure that the College fulfils all moral and statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and Prevent, and that the College is a safe and secure environment for staff and learners. It is their duty to:

- Review Child Protection and Safeguarding policy at least annually, as well as all other related policies/procedures.
- Undertake regular Safeguarding training/awareness as a Governor.
- Appoint a Board-Level Safeguarding Lead Governor.
- Gain assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective at the College.
- Receive an annual report and briefing on College Safeguarding practices from the DSL.
- Ensure the College has robust staff procedures in place for safer recruitment, training and dealing with allegations.
- Review lessons learnt where serious allegations and low-level concerns about staff are identified.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead & Officers (Safeguarding Team)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is ultimately responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding at the College. This is not delegated to others and the key responsibilities include:

- Lead and develop the implementation of safeguarding policy and procedure through effective management of the Safeguarding team.
- Ensure that the College is meeting all requirements set out in statutory legislation.
- Develop strong working partnerships with external agencies.
- Liaise with College Principal to inform them of high severity/high risk issues, incidents or cases, especially ongoing enquiries under S47 and police investigations.
- Report cases to and liaise with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) concerning staff member(s).
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all College staff to ensure safeguarding is always a key consideration.

Full details of the DSL role can be found at Annex C of KCSIE.

The College has a team of Safeguarding Officers who undertake activities delegated by the DSL. The activities include:

- Appointed as 'case manager' to specific safeguarding cases. As 'case manager', the Officers are responsible for external referrals, coordinating safeguarding and support interventions, reviewing cases as it develops, and reporting/updating DSL.
- Manage the College safeguarding inbox.
- Support DSL with organisational training and awareness activities for staff.
- Contribute to learner awareness of safeguarding, Prevent and associated themes by working closely with teaching and support staff.
- Assist individual staff with their queries as they emerge.

4.3 Staff (inc agency staff and volunteers)

All staff and volunteers have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of students by:

- Recognise and report signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Follow the college's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding team without delay.
- Maintain professional boundaries and appropriate conduct at all times.
- Participate in safeguarding training and continuous professional development.
- Support and promote a safe environment for all learners, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Respect confidentiality while ensuring concerns are shared appropriately.
- Cooperate with external agencies during safeguarding investigations, if required.

Full details of the responsibilities of College staff in relation to Safeguarding can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct (sections 6.0 – 9.18)

4.4 External agencies, professionals, partners, visitors and tenants

External professionals and partners are expected to adhere to the college's safeguarding policies and procedures, collaborate closely with the Safeguarding team, promptly report any concerns or incidents of abuse, maintain clear and open communication, and ensure that their practices support the safety and wellbeing of all learners and vulnerable individuals within the college community.

5.0 Preventative Measures

The college implements preventative measures such as safer recruitment, regular safeguarding training, risk assessments, and clear codes of conduct to create a safe environment, raise awareness, and reduce the risk of harm or abuse to learners and vulnerable individuals.

5.1 Safer Recruitment Practices

The college is committed to safer recruitment practices by ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and external partners undergo thorough background checks, including enhanced DBS checks, reference verification, online checks and interviews, to assess their suitability for working with children and vulnerable individuals. This process is designed to prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining access to learners and ensure a safe and protective environment.

5.2 Learning & Development

There is a programme of development through a range of mandatory and bespoke training, as well as robust conversations during appraisals and probation reviews. All staff are required to undertake a bi-annual safeguarding and Prevent training module. New starters are expected to complete this within 2 weeks of their start date and understanding of safeguarding is checked throughout probation period.

All new starters will undertake 2 face-to-face safeguarding induction sessions, led by the DSL or Safeguarding Officers during their probation period. Whilst all staff have access to face-to-face training throughout the year delivered by the Safeguarding team, covering a wide range of safeguarding content.

In addition to this, Professional Development Days feature sessions that are themed around specific safeguarding topics that are relevant to the context in which staff are undertaking their roles.

To have assurance of the impact of the training/CPD, the level of understanding of staff and how safeguarding knowledge is implemented, the College is committed to ongoing assessment of staff. Testing is undertaken through:

- Assessment embedded into the mandatory safeguarding module
- Robust conversations through appraisals and probation reviews where staff must be able to demonstrate satisfactory understanding. New starters requiring additional support are identified and supported by the DSL.
- Safeguarding is embedded within school deep dives as part of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment schedule for the year and specific feedback provided to DSL.
- An annual staff survey during the spring term to measure how confident staff feel around safeguarding.

Where specific areas within the College and/or individuals appear to require further support with safeguarding, bespoke training/awareness programmes are delivered by the DSL or Safeguarding Officers with the focus on building knowledge and confidence.

5.3 Risk Assessment

The college conducts regular risk assessments to identify potential safeguarding risks and implement appropriate measures to mitigate them, ensuring a safe environment for all learners and staff. These assessments help proactively address areas of concern and enhance overall safeguarding practices.

5.4 ID Badges

It is required that all learners, staff, governors and visitors visibly wear College ID badges. It is the responsibility of all staff to challenge individuals who do not have their ID badge visible. Any learner or staff who has forgotten or lost their ID badge must get a temporary/replacement from Reception.

All campus entrances and exits are operated by valid staff or learner ID badges. Anyone without a valid ID badge wanting to enter a campus, must use the buzzer function to communicate with Reception staff.

5.5 Children Missing or Absent from Education

Where students under the age of 18 are displaying erratic, long-term or regular absences, or other unusual attendance patterns, the College will ensure that staff follow up with parent/carers to ensure a full understanding of the underlying absence reasons is gained and recorded where appropriate.

6.0 Safeguarding Procedures

The college has clear safeguarding procedures in place to ensure the protection of all learners. These procedures are communicated, and relevant training is provided to all staff regularly.

The college ensures that safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with current legislation to maintain a safe and supportive environment.

6.1 Reporting Concerns or Incidents

The college recognises that it is an agent of referral and not of investigation. It is not the college's responsibility to investigate abuse. Staff should not extend an offer of confidentiality but should clearly inform the person that if information about abuse is disclosed there is a duty on staff to follow reporting procedures.

Staff are provided with clear guidance on identifying signs and indicators of harm, such as physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect. They are expected to be vigilant to these indicators so that warning signs are not overlooked.

All concerns or incidents must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding team using the designated safeguarding inbox (safeguarding@gloscol.ac.uk).

If a concern is urgent, staff should verbally report it to a member of the Safeguarding team without delay.

In the event of an emergency, staff must first contact emergency services (999) and then notify the Safeguarding team as soon as possible.

6.2 Responding to Disclosures

When responding to disclosures, staff are expected:

- to listen carefully to what is being said.
- to remain calm and non-judgemental.
- to avoid asking leading questions.
- to reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in sharing.
- to explain that the information will be shared with the Safeguarding team to ensure their safety.
- to record the disclosure as accurately as possible.
- to report it immediately to the safeguarding team.

Confidentiality must be respected, but no promises of secrecy should be made. The priority is always the individual's safety and well-being.

6.3 Confidentiality & Record Keeping

The college is committed to maintaining confidentiality while ensuring all safeguarding concerns are addressed appropriately. Every concern will be responded to promptly and accurately documented to ensure accountability and transparency.

All reported concerns, disclosures, and incidents must be recorded on *MyConcern*, the college's confidential safeguarding database.

Record-keeping should include detailed information such as the nature of the concern, any referrals made, interventions provided, progress tracked, outcomes achieved, and the rationale for all decisions.

Access to safeguarding records is restricted to authorised personnel, and all records are kept securely in line with data protection regulations.

6.4 Case Management

Each safeguarding case is assigned a dedicated Safeguarding Officer, who will lead on the case. In the absence of the appointed Officer, another member of the team will provide cover.

The appointed Safeguarding Officer will ensure all actions are coordinated and that the DSL is regularly updated on all developments.

The Safeguarding Officer will provide a formal update in regular Safeguarding Case Review team meetings to ensure timely and effective resolution of the case. Meetings are recorded and stored securely.

Safeguarding Officers will follow up with both staff and external agencies to obtain updates.

Relevant information and support interventions will be communicated to the wider college staff on a need-to-know basis, ensuring confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.

6.5 Escalation Procedures

If a safeguarding concern is not appropriately addressed or resolved, staff must follow the College's escalation procedures. This involves raising the issue with either the DSL or the Deputy DSL.

If concerns persist or there is a failure to act, the matter should be escalated to external agencies, such as social services or the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board, to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual at risk.

The college is committed to ensuring no safeguarding concern goes unaddressed.

7.0 Support for Learners

The college is committed to providing robust and personalised support for learners, particularly those who may be vulnerable. This includes access to mental health services, counselling, and tailored safeguarding interventions.

The college has a range of internal support available and works closely with external agencies to offer referral pathways ensuring learners receive the help they need.

All learners are encouraged to speak to staff if they have any concerns, and support is provided in a confidential and compassionate manner, ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and continued academic development.

7.1 Identification

The college is dedicated to the early identification of learners who may be at risk of harm or in need of additional support and achieve this through a variety of methods, including but not limited to:

- Involvement in Gloucestershire Y11 School Transition Panels, where young people at risk of becoming NEET due to varied and complex circumstances are identified and supported to transition into post-16 education.
- Liaise with secondary schools to obtain school safeguarding files for individual learners once enrolled at the College. Files are promptly reviewed and recorded by the Safeguarding team.
- Staff are trained to recognise indicators of vulnerability, abuse, or neglect and are encouraged to raise concerns with the safeguarding team promptly.
- Monitor reductions in recent attendance and explore further with support staff.

The college uses a proactive approach, including regular monitoring and communication with learners, to ensure that any issues are identified early, and appropriate safeguarding measures are implemented to protect and support learners.

7.2 Learner Support & Referral Pathways

The College provides a range of support and services to help learners when safeguarding concerns arise. Some examples of this include:

- Pastoral support
- Risk assessments and agreed personalised support strategies
- Wellbeing and crisis plans
- Counselling
- Financial support (including free college meals and vouchers)
- Additional learning support
- Tailored careers information, advice and guidance

In addition to this, the College has clear referral pathways to ensure that appropriate external support is provided. The Safeguarding and Student Support team are well connected with many of the external support agencies to ensure that interventions are well coordinated and effective.

7.3 Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

The College has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its learners. All staff should be aware that mental health/wellbeing issues can, in some cases, be an indicator that a learner has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The College's Mental Health Lead is responsible for implementing a robust referral and triage process for assessing concerns and delivering an appropriate level of wellbeing intervention(s) to enable a learner to continue to engage in their studies.

The College is committed to sourcing counselling support for learners when required and attempts to ensure that its learners can access support without the delay of extensive waiting lists.

8.0 Staff Related Concerns

The college takes staff-related concerns seriously and is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all learners.

8.1 Reporting Process

When there are any concerns in relation to the behaviour, conduct or practices of staff (including agency or volunteers), these must be reported directly to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately with as much detail as possible.

The college will ensure that all allegations are investigated promptly, fairly, and in accordance with established procedures, prioritising the safety and welfare of learners while ensuring due process for the staff involved.

8.2 Low-Level Concerns and Serious Allegations

The college encourages the reporting of both low-level concerns and serious allegations regarding staff behaviour, conduct and practices, ensuring all issues are addressed promptly and appropriately to maintain a safe and supportive environment.

Both low-level concerns and serious allegations will be appropriately and thoroughly investigated to identify appropriate outcomes, actions and lessons learned.

Low-level concerns and their outcomes are held on file within the College HR team.

Serious allegations will be investigated and escalated in line with statutory safeguarding procedures, which may include referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Allegations may meet threshold for an Allegations Management process coordinated by the LADO if the concerns is considered to be that the member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed 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.

In these circumstances, the College (DSL) will liaise with the LADO throughout the process, provide updates on internal investigation and respond to LADO expectations in relation to ensuring appropriate risk mitigations are implemented.

8.3 Investigation Procedures

The college follows a clear and transparent investigation process for all safeguarding concerns and allegations. This includes gathering relevant information, maintaining confidentiality, ensuring impartiality, and working with appropriate agencies when necessary. The aim is to resolve issues swiftly and fairly while prioritising the safety and wellbeing of those involved.

8.4 Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions will be taken if safeguarding policies are breached, ranging from warnings to dismissal, depending on the severity of the breach.

The college is committed to ensuring accountability and maintaining a safe environment by enforcing these measures in line with its safeguarding protocols.

9.0 Prevent Duty

The College recognises and is committed to its responsibility in relation to the Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) 2023, in relating to the Prevent Duty.

To ensure that the College effectively safeguards learners and staff, manages risks and is able to deal appropriately with issues around radicalisation and extremism, the College will:

- Understand the nature of the threat from extremism and how this may impact directly or indirectly on the College.
- Encourage staff and learners to respect and adhere to fundamental British values.
- Ensure staff receive awareness training in recognising and preventing extremism and radicalisation.
- Understand and manage potential risks within the College and from external influences including the potential to display extremist materials and the appropriate hiring of College buildings.
- Respond rapidly and appropriately to events in local, national or international news that may impact on the College community.
- Ensure measures are in place to minimise the potential for acts of extremism within the College.
- Ensure plans are in place to respond appropriately to a threat or incident within the College.
- Work with sub-contractors, employers and work placement providers to ensure they are compliant with the Prevent Duty and the College's safeguarding procedures.
- Adopt effective IT and cyber security and responsible user policies - and promote these to all staff and learners.

10.0 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Partnerships

The College builds partnerships and collaboration with external agencies, local authorities, social services, law enforcement and community organisations to enhance safeguarding practices and ensure the wellbeing of all learners. Regular meetings and information-sharing protocols are established to ensure that all parties remain informed and aligned in their safeguarding efforts.

By sharing information and resources, the college aims to create a coordinated approach to safeguarding. These partnerships facilitate effective intervention, support, and training, enabling a holistic response to concerns and promoting a culture of safety and trust within the College community.

10.1 Information Sharing Protocols

The college adheres to strict information-sharing protocols to ensure that safeguarding concerns are communicated effectively while respecting confidentiality and legal obligations.

Information regarding safeguarding issues will be shared on a need-to-know basis among staff, external agencies, and relevant partners to protect the welfare of learners.

All staff are trained on the importance of confidentiality and the circumstances under which information can be shared, ensuring that safeguarding is prioritised while safeguarding the rights and privacy of individuals involved.

External communication is encrypted through Egress and/or Office365 encryption to ensure confidentiality.

11.0 Online and Digital Safeguarding Arrangements

The college prioritises online and digital safeguarding arrangements to protect learners using the online space. This includes implementing robust cybersecurity measures, filtering and monitoring use of devices, and providing training for staff and learners on safe online practices.

Please read the College's Acceptable Use policy and Student Code of Conduct in conjunction with this section of the policy.

11.1 Online Safety

The college educates learners about the risks associated with online activities and encourages open communication about any concerns they may encounter. All 16-18 learners complete an online safety module as part of their induction, recognising the trend of young people having limited awareness of the risks online.

All staff and learners are expected to adhere to the college's acceptable use policy and their respective Code of Conduct, ensuring that technology is used responsibly and safely while fostering a supportive and secure digital learning environment.

11.2 Filtering and Monitoring

The college recognises its responsibilities as outlined in *KCSIE 2024* regarding online safety.

To this end, we have implemented sophisticated web filtering mechanisms, managed by the Head of IT & Cyber, to restrict access to inappropriate content.

Additionally, all college-owned learner devices are monitored using Securus Monitoring software, which alerts the safeguarding team to any concerning activities for further investigation.

Monthly and annual reports are generated to analyse data and identify trends, enabling the college to implement preventative interventions and continually enhance our safeguarding measures.

12.0 Contacts and Resources

12.1 Internal Safeguarding Contacts

To increase visibility of the Safeguarding team and raise awareness of who they are:

- Safeguarding team posters are displayed in all College classrooms, offices, corridors and toilets
- Poster is also posted on the College website
- Safeguarding team members all wear pink lanyards, opposed to the usual burgundy for other staff.

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	David Kettlety	E: David.kettlety@gloscol.ac.uk
Deputy DSL (Staffing)	Hannah Snelling	E: Hannah.snelling@gloscol.ac.uk
Deputy DSL (Learners)	Emma Haines	E: Emma.haines@gloscol.ac.uk
Safeguarding Team		E: Safeguarding@gloscol.ac.uk
Designated Teacher (LAC)	Emma Haines	E: Emma.haines@gloscol.ac.uk
Principal & CEO	Matthew Burgess	E: Matthew.burgess@gloscol.ac.uk
Chair of Governors	Will Abbot	E: Justine.cosson@gloscol.ac.uk
Safeguarding Lead Governor	Mary James	E: Justine.cosson@gloscol.ac.uk

12.2 External Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Local Authority Designated Officer	Nigel Hatton	T: 01452 426994 E: amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Gloucestershire Children's Services		T: 01452 426565 E: childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board		T: 01452 426565 E: gscb@gloucestershire.gov.uk
OFSTED		T: 0300 123 4666 E: CIE@ofsted.gov.uk
NSPCC Report Abuse in Education Advice Line		T: 0800 136 663 E: help@nspcc.org.uk

12.3 Helplines and Support Services

The Gloucestershire College website hosts an A-Z resource with extensive lists of helplines and support services beyond what is available at the College.

The guide can be found on the Safeguarding page of the website and using the link below.

<https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/media/qw2iowb3/mental-health-a-z.pdf>

13.0 Additional Information

This policy should be read and considered in conjunction with the following College policies:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Security Emergency Response Plan