

BIRMINGHAM COLLEGE

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

THE ROLE OF COLLEGE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN SAFEGUARDING

It is expected that all those who come into contact with students at Birmingham College will:

- Make themselves familiar with the College Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which will be provided at induction
- Know the name of the Designated Senior Manager and Safeguarding Officer at the College and what their roles entail. Currently Rafael Salguero and Alison Breen are trained and appointed Child Protection Officers
- Be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed below
- Report any concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Senior Manager
- Consult with the above if in any doubt as to how to proceed
- Raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with the Designated Senior Manager
- Follow the advice given in this document in relation to how to handle disclosures
- Ensure that behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or allegations of harm
- Participate in appropriate Safeguarding training on appointment and when updates are required

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

If it is believed that a student is suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm even in the absence of any physical evidence this must be brought to the attention of Rafael or Alison, who will liaise with the statutory bodies immediately or as a minimum within 24 hours in writing, or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral. In cases of serious harm the police will be informed from the outset.

If a student makes a disclosure about abuse to you, ensure that you do the following:

- **Allow the student to lead the discussion**, never stop a student who is freely recounting significant events and do not press for details by asking questions e.g. “what did they do next?”
- **Listen and be supportive** – don’t investigate, put words in the students mouth or ask leading questions. You may use questions such as “Is there anything else you’d like to tell me?”
- **Accept what the student says without challenge** - reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise the difficulty of the situation.
- Do not lay blame or criticise either the student or the alleged perpetrator
- **Never promise complete confidentiality** – you should advise that you will only be passing the information onto the appropriate person in the College in order to keep them and other students safe
- **Report the information immediately** to the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Senior Manager
- **Do not discuss the matter with anyone else**

- **Write an account of the conversation** immediately afterwards with the time, date and location of the conversation and name anyone else present. This should be signed and handed to Rafael or Alison as soon as possible.
- Follow up with Rafael or Alison if you have further concerns.

Remember that it is not the responsibility of the College to investigate suspected cases of abuse. It is however our responsibility to follow local safeguarding procedures and to recognise that a student making a disclosure may be the beginning of a legal process as well as the process of recovery for the young person or vulnerable adult. Legal action against the perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the victims account has in any way been influenced by the person they may have told.

- **If you become aware of an allegation of abuse made against another student** you must bring it to the attention of Rafael or Alison and the safeguarding procedure will be followed even when the abuse is alleged to have come from another student or students.
- **If you become aware of an allegation of abuse against a student by a member of staff or staff volunteer** you must bring it to the attention of the Rafael or Alison. If the allegation is against either Rafael or Alison then it must be reported to the Principal, or in the Principal's absence the lead administrator (Rinku).
- **If you become aware of an allegation that relates to the Principal** you must report this immediately to Rafael or Rinku.

In all instances, individual members of staff must not themselves take any further action, although if a parent, guardian or other individual volunteer information of relevance to the incident this should be recorded and passed to the Designated Senior Manager immediately.

IT IS BETTER TO RAISE CONCERNS WHICH MAY NOT NEED ACTION THAN TO DO NOTHING OR TO DELAY REPORTING.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

PHYSICAL ABUSE: This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or any other injury. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a young person or vulnerable adult. It is the responsibility of staff to raise any concern that that an injury may have been deliberate.

Concern should be raised if there is no explanation for an injury, if the explanation does not match the injury, if the young person or parent/carer is secretive or evasive and if there is an accompanying allegation of assault or abuse.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: *This does not generally arise from a single incident, Emotional abuse is:*

- Chronic and accumulative
- Has a long term impact
- An effect of all other abuse or neglect
- Possible when a young person or vulnerable adult witnesses another person being abused.

Emotional abuse impacts on behaviour, on the ability to relate socially to others, on their emotional responses and possibly on their overall development. Emotional abuse can be difficult to define, recognise and prove.

SEXUAL ABUSE: is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the victim. It is generally deliberate and thought about and planned for a long time in advance. The abuser may spend time getting to know the victim and gaining their trust – grooming. The abuser may also groom the victim’s environment so they will be trusted by their family/friends. There can be physical or behavioural indications of sexual abuse however indicators alone cannot confirm abuse. In any case where there is suspicion that sexual abuse may be involved it is important that it is reported to the Designated Senior Manager immediately.

NEGLECT: This is a lack of care with social deprivation and lack of information or provision of adequate services as possible contributory factors. Many of the young people on child protection plans are registered on the grounds of neglect and this may be a result of parents/carers failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or protection from physical or emotional harm.

There are physical and behavioural indicators of neglect however it is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is however equally as damaging as all other forms of abuse.

FINANCIAL ABUSE: This can be the theft or unlawful acquisition or malicious control of a child or vulnerable adults income, money or property e.g. misuse of benefits or withdrawing cash.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FALSE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

- Always adopt safe working practices with young people and vulnerable adults. In college be particularly conscious of not being alone with a young student. Keep the classroom door open when having a tutorial and avoid being alone with a young student on the top floor offices.
- Always seek permission and explain any physical contact such as administering first aid or comforting a distressed student
- Be sensitive to heritage, culture or faiths

Do Not:

- Kiss or cuddle a student
- Tickle or engage in other games involving physical contact
- Touch the student unless there is a justifiable reason
- Do not do anything of a personal nature for the student that they can do for themselves

- Encourage “favourites”. All students should be treated equally
- Give a student a lift alone in a car
- Give out your personal mobile phone number to students (unless as a College emergency contact number)
- Connect with current students via any form of personal social networking sites

WHAT IF A STUDENT PUSHES THE BOUNDARIES IN TERMS OF TOUCH?

- Gently but firmly disengage yourself
- Create distance between yourself and the student
- Explain it is inappropriate to be so close
- Do not humiliate the student
- Report it to the Rafael or Alison if you have concerns

GUIDANCE NOTES ON STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

This guidance is not exhaustive and is designed to set out principles rather than to give detailed and specific advice. This guidance applies to all adults working in the College who may interact with students during the course of their duties.

1. The relationship between staff and students is a professional one. It is fully expected – and indeed, hoped – that staff in the College have a friendly and caring approach to students. Nevertheless the basis of that relationship is professional not personal.

2. A personal relationship between a member of staff and a student is inappropriate. Such circumstances may be where there is a personal relationship between the member of staff and the student’s parents. It is not normally appropriate for a member of staff to meet with a student outside College.

3. Unnecessary physical contact with students must be avoided. If there is a need for physical contact e.g. where some restraint is required to avoid the student endangering themselves or others, you should be very sensitive to the likely reaction of the student and to watch out for signs that the student is uncomfortable or apprehensive.

4. Over familiar words and actions, displays of affection, discussion of one’s personal life or the personal life of the student are always inappropriate (as opposed to encouraging students to talk about their opinions and interests for the promotion of personalization in lessons). Sexual innuendo is wrong in all circumstances. Staff must avoid words, actions or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that they have an emotional relationship with any student. In the professional staff/student relationship it is not appropriate to single out a student for favours or to suggest to a student that he/she is a special friend.

5. Occasionally it is necessary for professional academic reasons for staff to communicate with students out of college. Personal email addresses, home or mobile phone numbers must not be given, asked for or used. Pastoral matters should not normally be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contacts. Only in extreme cases, for instance where there is concern for

the whereabouts of a student should personal contact information be used. If any contact is made using personal contact details it should be recorded on the student record. It is very difficult to envisage circumstances under which individual texting is appropriate except through official college channels.

6. It is not appropriate for students to visit staff in their own home.

7. Members of staff who in the course of their professional duties need to work on a one to one basis with a student must be mindful and aware of the safeguarding implications. In particular where the student is of the opposite sex it is important to ensure that the meeting is entirely professional and that the door to the room is left open.

8. Staff must avoid threatening words, raised voices, and any aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling which could amount to or be interpreted as a criminal assault. If there is an incident that requires intervention then an administrator, ideally Rinku who does not have a teaching role, should be summoned.

9. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and other social media, pose risks for all staff in terms of professional integrity and the welfare of students. Staff are advised not to use these sites to contact or communicate with students, with the exception of retaining professional links through the closed group site for the Birmingham Master Teacher Trainer Programme where tutors are able to post contributions and monitor developments. Should you become aware of material about yourself, the College or a student which is inappropriate, the principal must be informed and he will check the allegations and determine any course of action. You must not check it out yourself.

10. If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred or which has made you uncomfortable, you must discuss the matter with Rafael or Alison at the earliest opportunity even if it transpires that nothing untoward has happened. You must make a written record, dated and signed of the issue that concerns you.

11. Where any allegation is made against a member of staff the College is committed to dealing with the allegation fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the student and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.