

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that DN Colleges Group and all of its subsidiaries (hereafter referred to as 'the College') are provided with the overarching principles that guide our approach to Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- 1.2 This policy is written in line with the College's Strategy, Vision and Values which identify a commitment to safeguarding, health, safety and welfare, equality diversity and inclusion and data protection. The purpose of this policy is to prevent harm, promote wellbeing and safety. We have a responsibility to keep students, children, young people and vulnerable adults safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- 1.3 This policy demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding as detailed in key legislation and guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation, including any subsequent amendments or updates, and Working Together to Safeguard Children. In the event of concerns, worries or difficulties, the situation will be managed according to this policy and the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff.

2 Scope

- 2.1 We will establish an ethos where students feel safe so they can learn and develop whilst knowing who they can talk to if they are worried or need support. We will develop a culture where colleagues feel comfortable talking about wellbeing, recognise safeguarding matters and report concerns they may have.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all applicants, enrolled students, both FE and HE, irrespective of age, including Apprentices, Adults, whether full-time, part-time or distance learners. This policy applies to all staff, paid and non-paid, including agency workers, contractors, volunteers and Governors. The scope of this policy includes the children of adults who use our services. This policy also applies to visitors and those who use our facilities.
- 2.3 In terms of safer recruitment and selection, this policy also applies to those who apply for employment or placements at the College. This policy also gives guidance regarding practice and responsibility for admission, within the context of inclusion, for individuals who present with a criminal conviction and/or pending investigation.
- 2.4 We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of students, in particular children, young people and vulnerable adults and others in our communities, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them. Some students may be additionally vulnerable because of previous experiences, communication needs and/or other issues so additional safeguards may be needed.
- 2.5 Reasonable adjustments of additional support with any College procedure may be agreed, at the discretion of the Director of HR, who may rely on Occupational Health advice.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 Safeguarding is everyones responsibility. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all staff must report any worries, concerns or issues in a timely manner in accordance with this policy and the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff.
- 3.2 All staff, visitors and those who use our facilities must adhere to this policy and associated procedures for staff, visitors and premises hire.
- 3.3 Leaders and managers have a specific responsibility to ensure that they, and their staff, are fully aware of this policy and that it is applied in accordance with the procedures noted in the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff, visitors guidance and premises hire processes as appropriate.
- 3.4 Relevant colleagues are appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and take lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection. The College also appoints Deputy DSLs (DDSL's) who are trained to the same standard as DSLs.
- 3.5 The Director of HR has responsibility for the safer recruitment requirements of the policy and associated procedures.
- 3.6 The Chief Operating Officer – People and Information has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy in addition to ensuring sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable DSLs and DDSLs to discharge their responsibilities.
- 3.7 The Board of Governors will ensure compliance with local authority Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent policies, procedures and arrangements, in addition to the legislative requirements detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any subsequent amendments or updates.
- 3.8 The College will work in partnership with external agencies and be fully engaged, involved, and included in inter-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.9 All staff have a responsibility to access, read and understand the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff. All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and filtering and monitoring) at induction which will then be regularly updated. Staff will also be expected to access periodic and regular updates. DSLs and DDSLs will have their knowledge refreshed at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand emerging themes.

4 Definitions and/or Relevant Legislation

- 4.1 The Children Act (1989) defines a child as “a person under the age of 18”. This could therefore include any student up to the age of 18, siblings or other family members of students and any other persons under the age of 18 participating in College activities, using College facilities and/or on College premises.
- 4.2 Under the Care Act (2004) safeguarding duties apply to adults, defined as those over the age of 18 who have care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is

meeting any of those needs) and are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse.

- 4.3 The College requires disclosure of criminal convictions and/or pending investigations at the point of application and/or enrolment onto a programme, apprenticeship, employment or placement in addition to disclosure if these occur during the period of enrolment, employment or placement. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) convictions and/or pending investigations will be assessed according to factors in line with the context, offence, age and sentence, if any, received.
- 4.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff, visitors guidance and premises hire processes.
- 4.5 Relevant legislation and guidance includes, but is not limited to:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and any subsequent amendments or updates
 - Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) and any subsequent amendments or updates
 - Working Together To Safeguard Children (2023)
 - Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (2024)
 - SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)
 - The Equality Act (2010)
 - Universities UK How to handle alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence (2016)
 - Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
 - Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (2021)

5 The Policy

- 5.1 The safety and welfare of every member of our community is paramount. Students will have access to support, advice and assistance where there are Safeguarding, Child Protection and/or Prevent concerns, worries or difficulties. DSLs/DDSLs will offer advice and support for all staff regarding worries, concerns or issues they may have.
- 5.2 The College is committed to safeguarding with a student centred, collaborative approach. Students will be informed what action is being taken and why, ensuring their wishes and feelings have been considered along with their best interests. On occasion, the College may need to make referrals without consultation or consent from students and/or parents/carers, as defined by legislation, guidance and/or regulations.
- 5.3 We will endeavour to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of students and staff. A risk management approach will be used in relation to disclosing information to parents/carers. The DSL/DDSL will share information in the best interests of the student for the purpose of supporting and protecting individuals. Therefore we will share information with other College colleagues, parents/carers and external agencies where required.

- 5.4 Safeguarding can include a range of issues, risks, worries or concerns including, but not limited to:
- All forms of abuse including neglect
 - All forms of bullying, harassment and/or victimisation, including hate crimes
 - Radicalisation and extremist behaviour
 - Sexual misconduct, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment
- 5.5 All members of the College community and visitors must immediately act on and report any of the above issues or any other situation or concerns they consider to be a safeguarding matter. Further detail can be found in the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff, student guidance, visitors guidance and premises hire processes respectively. The College has responsibility to provide a safeguarding service during office hours and does not take responsibility for out of hours support unless on an authorised College Educational Visit.
- 5.6 When responding to disclosure, staff must not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL/DDSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next. Further detail can be found in the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff.
- 5.7 The College will maintain a culture of safer recruitment and has recruitment procedures which help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse or might have abused children, young people and vulnerable adults. Decisions will be made about the suitability of prospective employees based on checks and evidence including criminal record checks (DBS), barred list checks, references and recruitment and selection information following the processes detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023). The College will maintain a secure single central record (SCR) for all staff (defined in point 2.2) with detail of pre-appointment checks. Decisions will be made about the suitability of prospective students based on a risk management process overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.8 Allegations regarding staff (defined in point 2.2) will be managed according to the Managing Allegations Against Staff procedure and may be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Police, as detailed in the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff. Allegations regarding other individuals who present a real or perceived risk to children and/or vulnerable adults will be referred to the relevant agency according to procedures detailed in the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff.
- 5.9 The College will collate and store information relating to safeguarding, child protection and Prevent, ensuring all information held electronically is stored securely with due regard to meeting data protection and safeguarding requirements. Where the College shares information with external agencies it will be for the intended purpose and adhere to the principles detailed in Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (2024).
- 5.10 Safeguarding is of utmost concern and therefore Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent issues take priority in relation to any other policies and/or procedures.

5.11 The governance of safeguarding also includes internet filtering and monitoring and will be reported to Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

6 Relevant Policies and Procedures

6.1 Relevant Policies include, but are not limited to:

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- DNCG Behavioural Policies and procedures for students, staff and visitors including the Prevention from Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy

7 Who to Contact with Queries

7.1 For advice or guidance on any of the topics covered in this policy contact:

Safeguarding Team safeguarding@dncolleges.ac.uk
HR Team hr.group@dncolleges.ac.uk

7.2 It is recognised that managing disclosures, incidents or concerns may be stressful for staff. For additional support and guidance, staff may contact a member of the HR team or access the Employee Assistance Programme.

7.3 The policy will be monitored by the People Services Department.

7.4 If you require this information in another language or a different format, please contact Academic Services academic-services@dncolleges.ac.uk or hr.group@dncolleges.ac.uk.

8 Communication

8.1 The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be made available via staff Intranet, website and from the HR Team.

9 Authorisation

Policy Holder:	Rachel Maguire, Chief Operating Officer – People & Information
Union Approval Date:	N/A
SLT Approval Date:	27 August 2024
Governor Committee/ Board Approval Date:	People & Transformation Committee 10 September 2024 Corporation Board 29 September 2024
Next Review Date:	September 2027

*Policies will be reviewed every three years unless there is a specific requirement to undertake a review more frequently. If for any reason a review does not take place in the planned period, the policy will remain current until a review takes place.

The Equality Impact has been considered on this policy and procedure.