

GUIDANCE

Responding to allegations of abuse or neglect

Contact Officer

Director of HR – advice and guidance for staff

Pro Vice Chancellor (Students) – advice and guidance for students

Purpose

This guidance is designed to support and advise staff and students on how to respond to allegations of abuse or neglect in relation to children or vulnerable adults as outlined in the Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Guidance

1. All University members (ie. staff and students) must be alert to the possibility that the children they are working with may have been, or may be, at risk of being abused. All complaints/allegations of such abuse must be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the following procedure. Definitions of the terms ‘abuse’ and ‘neglect’ can be found in Appendix 1.
2. Reference can also be usefully made of the Department of Education’s Guidance on *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013*¹.
3. Where a detailed institute/departmental policy is in place, staff should refer to the reporting procedure in accordance with that policy. However, should there be any doubt regarding a policy or if no departmental policy exists, the guidance below should be followed.
4. If a University member has a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused he/she should seek the advice and assistance of the Nominated Safeguarding Officer, setting out the basis of the suspicion as clearly as possible. This should be done immediately without awaiting confirmation of concerns.
5. If a University member receives from a child an allegation that they or another child is being abused, has been abused, or is at risk of abuse s/he should:

¹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

- a. Listen carefully and stay calm.
 - b. Ensure that s/he does not interview the child. However, if necessary, he/she may seek to clarify, using open questions and without putting words into the child's mouth, in order to be sure that they understand what the child is telling them.
 - c. Reassure the child that by telling him/her they have done the right thing.
 - d. Inform the child that s/he must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told.
 - e. Inform the child to whom s/he will report the matter.
 - f. Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said and did and the questions asked of the child etc. A pro-forma is provided ² to assist with this record.
6. University members should not generally make referrals to Children and Young People's Services/Safeguarding Adults Board or other authorities themselves. Rather, the detailed note/proforma should first be discussed with a Nominated Safeguarding Officer (see Appendix 2).
 7. On receipt of a report of an allegation of child or adult abuse (which may be contemporary or historical) by a University member, the Nominated Safeguarding Officer will discuss the detail with the person reporting and, if it is felt necessary, will further discuss the issue with the University's Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy). In exceptional circumstances, such as when the matter is of extremely high urgency due to significant risk of harm, the Nominated Safeguarding Officer can immediately refer to the matter to Children and Young People's Services/the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police.
 8. Typically, referral to Children and Young People's Services/the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police should be made by a Designated Safeguarding Officer.
 9. Where an allegation of abuse is received by the University concerning a University member the Nominated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) will normally consult with the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will, if appropriate, refer the case to Children and Young People's Services/the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police. At this point appropriate staff or student disciplinary procedures may be initiated.

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Appendix 2: List of key Safeguarding officers

Appendix 3: Proforma for managing allegations of abuse or neglect

Appendix 4: Summary Flowchart outlining process where concerns are raised

² See Appendix 3, below

Related Policies / Procedures

University Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy
University Guidance on Lone Working

Date Approved	<i>March 2013</i>
Date for Review	<i>March 2016</i>
Approval Authority	<i>University Safeguarding Sub-Committee</i>

Appendix 1

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Appendix 2: Key Safeguarding Officers

Designated Safeguarding Officers: Ross Renton, Pro Vice Chancellor (Students)
Adele Hope, Director of HR

Nominated Safeguarding Officers:

The membership of the Safeguarding Committee at any given time comprises the University's Nominated Safeguarding Officers. This Committee is chaired by Ann Jordan, Head of Institute of Education. Ann can be contacted on 01905 85 5040.



Appendix 3

**SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES
Record of Concerns**

Name of Subject:
Address:
Telephone No:
Parent/Guardian/Carer details: Name(s):
Telephone No(s):
What is said to have happened or what was seen?
When and where did it occur?
Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?
What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs e.g., bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

Was the child able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?

You should now pass this form to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for your department and/or the University's Nominated Officer or a Deputy Nominated Officer.

Signed

Date

Action taken by Nominated/Designated Safeguarding Officer

Signed by the Nominated/Designated Safeguarding Officer:

.....

Date:

Appendix 4

If you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult being abused or neglected:

A member of the University has concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult



Where a child discloses abuse or neglect, they should not be questioned further and a record made of what has been said (proforma Appendix 3). The alleged abuser should not be approached. See guidance on 'responding to allegations of abuse'.



Discuss concerns with Nominated Safeguarding Officer (see Appendix 2)



If concerns remain following discussion with Nominated Officer, contact Designated Safeguarding Officer



Designated Officer will contact the appropriate authority, normally Children and Young People's Services, the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police