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| **GUIDANCE**  |
| **Responding to allegations of abuse and neglect** |
| **Contact Officer** |
| *Director of HR – Safeguarding Officer/Lead and advice and guidance for staff**Head of the School of Education – Safeguarding Officer/Lead and advice and guidance for students* |

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| **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 Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.**Allegations relating to Domestic Abuse are to be handled separately – details are contained within the Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Stalking Policy.* |
| **Guidance** |
| 1. All University members (ie. staff and students) must be alert to the possibility that the children and vulnerable adults they are working with may have been, or may be, at risk of neglect or being abused. All complaints/allegations of such abuse or neglect must be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the following procedure.
2. Reference should also be usefully made of the Department for Education’s Guidance on *Working Together to Safeguard Children 20181.*
3. Where a detailed School/departmental reporting procedure is in place, staff should refer to that. However, should there be any doubt regarding a procedure or if no departmental procedure exists, the guidance below should be followed.
4. If a University member has a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected (see definitions in Appendix 1) they should seek the advice of the appropriate University Safeguarding Officer/Lead, 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 or vulnerable adult an allegation that they or another child or vulnerable adult is being, has been, or is at risk of abuse or neglect they should:
	1. Listen carefully and stay calm.
	2. Ensure that they do not interview the child or vulnerable adult. However, if necessary, they may seek to clarify, using open questions and without putting words into their mouth, in order to be sure that they understand what the child or vulnerable adult is telling them.
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1<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

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| 1. Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that by telling them, they have done the right thing.
2. Inform the child or vulnerable adult that they must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told.
3. Inform the child or vulnerable adult to whom they will report the matter.
4. Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what was said to have happened and the questions asked etc. A proforma is provided to assist with this record (see Appendix 2).
5. 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 the University Safeguarding Lead for Students or the University Safeguarding Lead for Staff as appropriate, and the completed proforma then forwarded to safeguarding@worc.ac.uk.
6. On receipt of a report of an allegation of child or adult abuse (which may be contemporary or historical) by a University member, the University Safeguarding Lead for Staff or Students will discuss the detail with the person reporting. In exceptional circumstances, such as when the matter is of extremely high urgency due to significant risk of harm, the Safeguarding Lead can immediately refer to the matter to Children and Young People’s Services/the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police.
7. Typically, referral to Children and Young People’s Services/the Safeguarding Adults Board and/or the Police should be made by a University Safeguarding Lead.
8. Where an allegation of abuse is received by the University concerning a University member the University Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) will normally consult with the Chair of the University Safeguarding Committee and other Senior Staff 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: Proforma for managing allegations of abuse or neglect |

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| **Related Policies / Procedures** |
|  *University Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults* |

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| **Date Originally Approved** | *March 2013* |
| **Date of Last Review** | *April 2021* |
| **Date for Next Review** | *April 2024* |
| **Approval Authority** | *University Safeguarding Sub-Committee* |

# Appendix 1 DEFINITIONS

**Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

# 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.

**Child criminal exploitation**

Child criminal exploitation is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**County lines**

County line is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line’. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

# Appendix 2

**SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

**Record of Concerns**

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| 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? |

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| Were there any obvious signs e.g., bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour? |
| Was the child/vulnerable adult able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it? |
| You should now send this form to the University Safeguarding Lead for Students (currently the Head of School of Education) or the University Safeguarding Lead for Staff (currently the Director of HR) by emailing it to safeguarding@worc.ac.uk  |

Signed ………………………………………………………………………………. Date …………………….

Action taken by University Safeguarding Lead

 Signed by the University Safeguarding Lead: …………………………………………………………………………………………..

 Date: ………………………………………