WEST THAMES COLLEGE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1. Statement

West Thames College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults deemed vulnerable. Our approach aligns with statutory guidance issued by the UK Department for Education, including the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. Specifically, we adhere to the principles outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, which sets the framework for inter-agency working to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

Our safeguarding practices also comply with the requirements of:

- The Education Act 2002, Section 175.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015.

These regulations require schools and colleges in England to uphold safeguarding protocols to protect students effectively.

In accordance with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, West Thames College is obligated under the Prevent duty to *"have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."* We work closely with the local Prevent lead to stay informed about local concerns and to refer students of concern to the Channel process. Our efforts aim to safeguard students from radicalisation and violent extremism through our tutorial programme, curriculum, and enrichment activities.

West Thames College is dedicated to the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff, and individuals associated with the College, including offsite students, apprentices, and subcontracted providers. We actively promote the welfare of all students, including those with additional needs, and mental and physical health concerns. All teaching and support staff, volunteers, and partner agencies are expected to adhere to these safeguarding practices at all times.

Staff are required to read this guidance alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), specifically part one. The College works with the local Safeguarding Partnership and Prevent multi-agency groups to ensure effective arrangements are in place for identifying, assessing, and supporting individuals who may be at risk of harm. Further details are provided in Appendix 3.

Our safeguarding approach is guided by the following principles:

- Every student, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, is entitled to equal protection from harm or abuse.
- Safeguarding is a collective responsibility.
- Early intervention is preferable to prevent issues from escalating.
- Effective safeguarding involves collaboration with students, their families, and relevant agencies.

2. Human Rights Act 1998

West Thames College is bound by the **Human Rights Act 1998,** which requires all public bodies to uphold the rights set out in the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).** It is unlawful for the College to act in ways that breach these rights.

Key rights relevant to safeguarding include:

- **Article 3:** Freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment (absolute).
- **Article 8**: Right to respect for private and family life, including physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Article 14**: Protection from discrimination in the enjoyment of these rights.
- **Protocol 1**, **Article 2**: Right to education.

Any concerns involving harassment, violence, abuse, or sexual misconduct will be addressed under the College's Safeguarding and Academic Misconduct policies in line with these legal obligations.

3. The Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults participating in education and training at West Thames College. It aims to foster a comprehensive awareness among staff regarding safeguarding issues that may put children and vulnerable adults at risk. This includes recognising the indicators and signs of potential harm, and knowing how to identify and report such concerns effectively.

This policy applies to all individuals involved with West Thames College, including:

Students
College staff
Governors
Volunteers
Visitors
Contracted services such as agency staff, employers offering work placements, transportation companies, and contractors who have direct access to children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

4. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and national safeguarding expectations. It supports West Thames College in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy should be read alongside all associated College safeguarding procedures and guidance.

The College's safeguarding arrangements are informed by, but are not limited to, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2011
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, including the Prevent Duty
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003, including Position of Trust provisions
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – Procedural Information (2020)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018, where applicable

The College will also have regard to guidance issued by the Department for Education, the Home Office, the Department of Health and Social Care, local safeguarding partnerships and other statutory agencies where this supports effective safeguarding practice.

5. Definition of a Child

For the purposes of this policy, and in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, a **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Whilst safeguarding legislation relating to child protection applies to those under the age of 18, West Thames College recognises that many learners aged 18 and over remain vulnerable due to disability, mental or physical ill health, special educational needs, previous trauma, exploitation or other personal circumstances. The College therefore adopts a whole-college safeguarding approach that promotes the safety, wellbeing and welfare of all learners, regardless of age.

Learners aged **18 to 24** with an active **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** continue to receive appropriate safeguarding support through the College's wider safeguarding responsibilities and duties under the **Care Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010**, and associated statutory guidance. Whilst these learners are adults in law, the College recognises that they may require additional support to remain safe, access education and achieve positive outcomes.

6. Definition of an Adult at Risk

For the purposes of this policy, an **adult at risk** (sometimes referred to as a vulnerable adult) is a person aged 18 or over who, in accordance with the **Care Act 2014:**

has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are currently being met);
is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

This may include adults whose vulnerability arises from physical or learning disabilities, mental health, long-term medical conditions, substance misuse, caring responsibilities, previous trauma or other circumstances that increase their risk of harm.

Adult Safeguarding

West Thames College recognises that safeguarding adults differs from safeguarding children. Adult safeguarding is underpinned by the six statutory principles of the **Care Act 2014:**

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

The College will work collaboratively with learners, parents and carers (where appropriate), employers, local authorities and partner agencies to promote wellbeing, reduce risk and support adults to make informed decisions wherever they have the mental capacity to do so. Where there are concerns that an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, or lacks the capacity to make decisions about their own safety, the College will take appropriate safeguarding action, including referral to Adult Social Care, the Police or other statutory agencies where necessary.

Policy Review and Monitoring

The Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and local safeguarding partnership expectations.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where required by changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements. The review will be led by the Director of Student Experience, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in consultation with the Vice Principal. Following approval by the Governing Body, the policy will be published on the College website and made available to all staff via Connect.

A formal Annual Safeguarding Report will be produced by the Director of Student Experience and submitted to the Governing Body. This report will evaluate:

- Safeguarding activity and disclosures.
- Emerging trends or risks.
- Training completion and effectiveness.
- Any revisions required to policy or procedures.

7. Oversight and Monitoring

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements at West Thames College are effective, compliant with statutory requirements and subject to appropriate scrutiny and challenge.

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- **The Governing Body,** through the Annual Safeguarding Report and termly meetings with the Safeguarding Link Governor.
- **The Executive Leadership Team,** through strategic oversight of safeguarding performance, statutory compliance and emerging risks.
- **The Vice Principal for Creative,** Inclusion and Student Experience, through operational assurance and quality improvement.
- **The College Management Team (CMT),** through regular monitoring of safeguarding performance, compliance and identified actions.
- **The Safeguarding Committee,** through the review of safeguarding activity, emerging themes, training compliance, policy implementation and quality assurance.

Monitoring will include safeguarding data, audits, learner feedback, training compliance, multi-agency working, quality assurance activities and the effectiveness of safeguarding practice to support continuous improvement.

8. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

West Thames College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every learner. We will:

- Place learners at the centre of everything we do, ensuring their safety, wellbeing and best interests inform all decisions and actions.
- Maintain effective safeguarding arrangements, including robust policies, safer recruitment, professional standards and a culture of continuous improvement that reflects statutory guidance and emerging safeguarding risks.
- Protect learners from all forms of harm, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, online harm and radicalisation, through early identification, timely intervention and effective risk management.
- Create a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where learners feel they belong, are valued, listened to and able to thrive.
- Equip staff and learners with the knowledge and skills to safeguard effectively, through high-quality training, curriculum delivery, tutorials and wider Student Experience activities that promote resilience, healthy relationships, digital literacy and awareness of safeguarding risks.
- Work collaboratively with families, employers and safeguarding partners to share information appropriately, coordinate support and achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and adults at risk.

This approach ensures that our safeguarding measures remain robust and responsive to emerging needs and challenges.

Safeguarding Responsibilities of All Staff

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and must always act in their best interests.

All staff are expected to maintain an attitude of ***"it could happen here",*** recognising that abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm can occur in any setting. Staff should remain professionally curious, be alert to changes in a learner's presentation, behaviour or circumstances, and never assume that someone else will take action.

All staff must:

- complete mandatory safeguarding, Prevent and associated training during induction and participate in annual updates and ongoing safeguarding briefings throughout their employment;
- read and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One, this policy and associated safeguarding procedures appropriate to their role;
- recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns without delay, recording all concerns on MyConcern and notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and comply with the College's Code of Conduct and all safeguarding-related policies;
- work collaboratively with colleagues and external agencies, sharing information appropriately to safeguard learners; and
- promote a culture of safeguarding, inclusion and respect, ensuring that learners feel safe, listened to and know how to access support.

Staff should recognise that learners may not always be ready or able to disclose abuse, neglect or exploitation and may not recognise that what they are experiencing is harmful. All staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity, build trusted relationships with learners and respond with empathy, sensitivity and without judgement. Concerns must be managed in accordance with the College's safeguarding reporting procedures (see Section 18 and Appendix 4).

Safeguarding Leadership, Governance and Accountability

West Thames College recognises that effective safeguarding requires strong leadership, robust governance and clear accountability at every level of the organisation. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; however, the Corporation, CEO Principal, Executive Leadership Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and College managers each have distinct statutory and operational responsibilities to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, compliant with legislation and embedded throughout the College.

The College is committed to maintaining a safeguarding culture where learners feel safe, valued and supported, staff are confident to identify and report concerns, and leaders continuously monitor, evaluate and strengthen safeguarding practice.

The Corporation

The Corporation has overall strategic responsibility for ensuring that the College fulfils its statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Corporation will ensure that:

- **Statutory Compliance:** The College complies with all relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.
- **Leadership and Governance:** Effective safeguarding governance is maintained through the appointment of a trained Safeguarding Link Governor, annual policy review, quality

assurance and strategic oversight.

- **Resources and Capacity:** The College provides sufficient leadership, staffing, funding and resources to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Team to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- **Safe Practice:** Robust arrangements are in place for safer recruitment, online safety, information sharing, multi-agency working, and the management of allegations, low-level concerns and whistleblowing.
- **Safeguarding Culture:** Safeguarding is embedded throughout the curriculum, tutorial programme, wider student experience and all College provision, ensuring learners' voices are heard and their welfare remains central to decision-making.
- **Monitoring and Assurance:** Safeguarding effectiveness is regularly monitored through compliance reviews, audits, safeguarding reports and the Annual Safeguarding Report, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability.

The CEO Principal

The CEO Principal has overall executive responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding remains a strategic priority across the College and that statutory safeguarding duties are effectively implemented.

The CEO Principal will ensure that:

- safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently across the College;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Team are appropriately supported and resourced;
- safeguarding responsibilities are understood by all staff;
- staff feel confident and empowered to raise safeguarding concerns without fear of reprisal;
- safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately, proportionately and without delay;
- safeguarding remains integral to the College's strategic planning, quality assurance and continuous improvement arrangements; and
- the Corporation receives appropriate assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Team

The Director of Student Experience is the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has lead operational and strategic responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The DSL is supported by appropriately trained Safeguarding Officers who work collaboratively to ensure safeguarding advice, support and decision-making are available across all College sites throughout the academic year.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- lead the College's safeguarding arrangements and provide expert safeguarding advice and support;
- manage safeguarding concerns, referrals, multi-agency working and statutory safeguarding processes;
- maintain oversight of safeguarding records, risk management and learner support;
- lead the development and annual review of safeguarding policies, procedures and statutory compliance;
- oversee safeguarding awareness, mandatory onboarding, staff training and compliance monitoring; and
- monitor safeguarding effectiveness, analyse emerging risks and provide assurance to senior leaders and the Corporation.

Executive Leadership Team and College Managers

Executive leaders and managers are responsible for embedding safeguarding within their areas of responsibility and will ensure that:

- staff understand and comply with safeguarding policies and procedures;
- safeguarding is promoted through the curriculum, tutorials and wider student experience;
- mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training are completed and monitored;
- safeguarding concerns are identified, reported and managed promptly;
- students know how to access support and feel safe to raise concerns; and
- safeguarding contributes to local quality improvement and continuous monitoring.

To ensure that safeguarding advice and support are readily accessible, the College maintains a clearly defined safeguarding structure led by appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Safeguarding Officers and specialist staff. The safeguarding governance structure in Appendix 1 identifies the key safeguarding roles, reporting lines and points of contact across the College. Staff are expected to be familiar with the structure, know who to contact for safeguarding advice and understand how to report concerns promptly in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures.

9. Safer recruitment, Contractors and Professional Conduct

West Thames College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk through robust safer recruitment practices, professional standards and a culture of openness and accountability. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals working with learners are suitable, appropriately vetted and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Safer Recruitment

The College operates safer recruitment procedures in accordance with statutory guidance and maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) of all required pre-employment checks.

Safer recruitment arrangements include:

- verifying identity, qualifications, employment history and professional references;
- undertaking appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other statutory pre-employment checks;
- assessing candidates' suitability to work with children through safeguarding-focused recruitment processes;
- ensuring all new staff complete mandatory safeguarding onboarding before working with learners; and
- maintaining accurate recruitment records in accordance with statutory requirements.

Contractors, Agency Staff and Visitors

All contractors, agency workers and other adults working on College premises are expected to comply with the College's safeguarding, health and safety and security procedures appropriate to the nature of their work.

The College will ensure that:

- appropriate safeguarding checks are completed where required;
- contractors and agency staff receive relevant safeguarding information before commencing work;
- all visitors and contractors can be readily identified whilst on College premises; and
- appropriate supervision arrangements are implemented where necessary to safeguard learners.

Professional Conduct

All staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and to act in accordance with the College's Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies.

Staff will:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries with learners;
- promote a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment;
- report safeguarding concerns and concerns regarding the conduct of adults without delay;
- act with integrity, professionalism and accountability at all times; and
- understand that breaches of professional standards may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, referral to external agencies.

Allegations, Low-Level Concerns and Whistleblowing

The College promotes a culture where safeguarding concerns relating to adults are recognised, reported and managed promptly and fairly.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College will:

- manage allegations and low-level concerns in accordance with statutory guidance and College procedures;
- ensure concerns about adults working with learners are reported to the appropriate senior leader, Head of HR or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where required;
- support staff to raise safeguarding concerns through the College's Whistleblowing Policy without fear of detriment; and
- investigate concerns appropriately, maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding the welfare of learners throughout the process.

By embedding safer recruitment, high standards of professional conduct and effective reporting arrangements into everyday practice, West Thames College ensures that learners are safeguarded by competent, accountable and trusted adults. The College actively promotes a culture of openness where staff feel confident to raise safeguarding concerns without fear of detriment. Where internal reporting routes are not appropriate or have not been effective, staff may seek independent advice through the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line or other appropriate external reporting mechanisms, in accordance with the College's Whistleblowing Policy.

Staff Training and Awareness

All staff, including temporary, agency, visiting and contracted staff, receive mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training as part of their induction before commencing work with students. This forms part of the College's mandatory onboarding programme, ensuring that all new staff are introduced to their safeguarding responsibilities regardless of when they join the organisation during the academic year.

Staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training, read **Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026,** and familiarise themselves with the College's safeguarding policies, procedures, reporting arrangements and Code of Conduct. In accordance with KCSIE 2026, this expectation applies to **all staff,**
including those who do not work directly with children.

The mandatory onboarding programme is delivered throughout the academic year to ensure new staff receive timely safeguarding training, understand local safeguarding risks, know how to report concerns using the College's safeguarding systems, and are aware of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding and Prevent training is refreshed at annually through the College's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme and supplemented by regular safeguarding updates,

briefings and communications. This ensures staff remain informed of emerging risks, local and national safeguarding priorities, changes to statutory guidance, and are equipped to recognise the early signs of radicalisation, extremism and other safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

All Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) at West Thames College are required to undertake specialised training in safeguarding and child protection, with a strong emphasis on effective inter-agency working. This training equips DSLs to manage referrals, coordinate with external services, and lead safeguarding practices confidently and competently.

To ensure their knowledge remains current and aligned with national guidance, DSLs must complete refresher training every three years. This ongoing professional development enables them to respond effectively to complex safeguarding concerns and emerging risks.

In addition, the College's Lead Governor for Safeguarding is expected to participate in relevant safeguarding and inter-agency training. This ensures the governing body provides informed scrutiny and strategic oversight of the College's safeguarding arrangements.

10. Prevent Duty and Counter-Extremism

West Thames College is committed to safeguarding learners from the risk of radicalisation and extremism and fulfilling its statutory duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty). In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College recognises that protecting learners from radicalisation forms part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities.

The College promotes a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where learners are encouraged to think critically, challenge extremist narratives, respect different views and develop the knowledge, confidence and resilience needed to participate positively in modern British society. Through the promotion of the Shared Values of Integrity, Excellence, Equality and Respect, we foster a culture of openness, tolerance and mutual respect.

The College will:

- **Promote prevention through education,** embedding Prevent, Shared Values, digital literacy and critical thinking throughout learners' study programmes, tutorial provision and wider Student Experience.
- **Identify and respond to concerns,** ensuring staff recognise the indicators of radicalisation and report concerns immediately using MyConcern, enabling timely assessment and intervention by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Provide appropriate support,** working with learners, families and external agencies, including the Police, Local Authority Prevent Leads and the Channel Programme, where appropriate.
- **Maintain a safe learning environment,** ensuring external speakers, events and visiting organisations are appropriately risk assessed and that learners are protected from extremist or harmful influences.
- **Work collaboratively with safeguarding partners,** sharing information appropriately and participating in multi-agency arrangements to manage risk and safeguard learners.
- **Develop staff knowledge and confidence,** ensuring all staff receive mandatory Prevent training during induction, annual safeguarding updates and ongoing professional development to recognise and respond to emerging risks.

Key Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental Shared Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- **Radicalisation** is the process by which an individual comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

- **Terrorism** has the meaning given within the Terrorism Act 2000 and includes the use or threat of action designed to influence the government or intimidate the public for political, religious, racial or ideological purposes.

The College recognises that vulnerability to radicalisation can affect any learner regardless of age, background or circumstances. Concerns relating to radicalisation will always be managed as safeguarding concerns and responded to in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures.

Confidentiality and sharing information

Data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), do not obstruct the sharing of information necessary for safeguarding and protecting children. The legal and secure exchange of information between educational institutions, Children's Social Care, and other local agencies is vital to ensuring children's safety and well-being and providing the support they need.

Safeguarding concerns always take precedence over data protection where a child's safety or welfare is at risk. Legally, information can be shared without consent where seeking consent would place a child at greater risk, where it is not possible to obtain consent, or where there is a legal obligation to do so. The College always acts in the best interests of the child when making these decisions.

All staff understand that fears about breaching data protection laws must never be a barrier to safeguarding children. Appropriate organisational and technical measures are in place to ensure that personal data is shared securely, lawfully, and proportionately. Staff are trained to handle information responsibly and understand the limits of confidentiality.

When parental consent is required, for example, for off-site visits or medical treatment, the College adopts a careful and legally robust approach. In situations where there is disagreement between parents or carers, the College will treat consent as not having been granted. This ensures that decisions are made in the best interests of the student, align with our safeguarding responsibilities, and reduce the risk of potential legal or safeguarding complications.

By embedding these principles into its safeguarding practice, the College ensures that essential information is shared effectively with relevant agencies, such as Children's Social Care, the police, or mental health services, while upholding its legal obligations under data protection law. This balanced approach supports early intervention, protects vulnerable learners, and promotes a culture of professional curiosity and proactive safeguarding.

11. Safeguarding Learners Aged Under 16

West Thames College is committed to safeguarding learners aged under 16, whether they attend through direct enrolment, commissioned provision, alternative provision, school partnerships or other pre-16 programmes. All learners are entitled to the same high standards of safeguarding, protection and welfare.

For learners who are directly enrolled at the College, safeguarding responsibilities are managed in accordance with this Policy, with West Thames College acting as the lead safeguarding organisation.

Where learners attend through commissioned or partnership arrangements, the College will work closely with the commissioning school, local authority or other provider to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined, information is shared appropriately and learners receive a coordinated safeguarding response. Responsibilities will be managed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, local safeguarding procedures and any partnership agreements.

The College will:

- provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all learners aged under 16, ensuring safeguarding remains central to their educational experience;

- identify, record and respond to safeguarding concerns without delay, ensuring all concerns, decisions and actions are recorded on MyConcern;
- maintain effective communication with parents, carers, commissioning schools and partner organisations, where appropriate, to support the learner's safety and wellbeing;
- work collaboratively with Children's Social Care, the Police, commissioning schools and other safeguarding partners to ensure timely intervention and coordinated support;
- ensure safeguarding responsibilities are clearly understood, including lead responsibility for referrals and statutory safeguarding action where learners attend under partnership arrangements; and
- provide appropriate pastoral and safeguarding support, ensuring every learner has access to trusted adults and knows how to seek help if they have a concern.

By adopting a child-centred approach and working collaboratively with families, schools and safeguarding partners, West Thames College ensures that learners aged under 16 receive appropriate protection, support and intervention, enabling them to learn in a safe environment and achieve their full potential.

12. Safeguarding Across Co-Located Providers

Ambitious College, The Rise Sixth Form and Woodbridge Park Education Service, based at both the Isleworth Campus and the Skills + Logistics Centre, are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All providers recognise their shared responsibility to maintain a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment and to work collaboratively to protect the welfare of all learners across the shared estate.

Whilst each organisation retains responsibility for implementing its own safeguarding policy and statutory duties, all safeguarding arrangements operate within a collaborative framework designed to ensure a coordinated response where concerns arise across providers.

All staff are required to comply with their own organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures. These policies are expected to align with the safeguarding principles and standards established by West Thames College, ensuring a consistent approach to safeguarding, information sharing, risk management and multi-agency working across the campus.

To support effective partnership working, safeguarding policies for all co-located providers are maintained in a central, accessible location. This enables Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Deputy DSLs and other key staff with strategic safeguarding responsibility to access the most up-to-date safeguarding procedures for each organisation, supporting effective decision-making, appropriate information sharing and coordinated safeguarding responses where concerns involve more than one provider.

Regular communication between safeguarding leads across all providers ensures that safeguarding arrangements remain effective, emerging risks are appropriately managed, and children, young people and vulnerable adults receive timely, coordinated support regardless of which organisation they attend.

13. Universal Services, Family Help and External Referrals

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, West Thames College recognises that safeguarding is most effective when support is provided as soon as concerns emerge. The College is committed to identifying needs at the earliest opportunity and ensuring that children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, through an appropriate level of intervention.

Support may be provided through Universal Services, Community-based Early Help, Targeted Early Help (Family Help) or, where necessary, through Statutory Children's Social Care.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or an appropriately trained member of the Safeguarding Team, will assess the level of need, coordinate referrals where appropriate and work collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure children receive timely, coordinated and proportionate support.

Graduated Safeguarding Response

The College's safeguarding response is based on the following principles:

- **Early Identification:** Staff should remain professionally curious, recognising changes in a learner's presentation, behaviour or circumstances and reporting concerns promptly through the College's safeguarding procedures.
- **Proportionate Support:** Learners will receive support appropriate to their level of need, beginning with Universal Services and progressing to Community-based Early Help, Targeted Early Help (Family Help) or statutory intervention where required.
- **Multi-Agency Working:** The College will work collaboratively with families, local authorities, health services, the Police and other partner agencies to coordinate effective safeguarding support.
- **Timely Referral:** Timely Reporting and Referral: Staff must record all safeguarding concerns, disclosures and welfare concerns on MyConcern as soon as possible and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay. The DSL or Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk and, where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care and, where appropriate, the Police.
- **Ongoing Review:** Safeguarding concerns will be continually monitored and reviewed. Where a learner's circumstances change or risks increase, the level of support and intervention will be reassessed and escalated where necessary.
- **Child-Centred Practice:** All safeguarding decisions will be informed by the child's best interests, ensuring their wishes, views and lived experiences are considered alongside professional judgement and statutory guidance.

Responsibilities of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to identify children who may benefit from additional support and to report concerns promptly through the College's safeguarding procedures.

Staff should maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here",* recognising that safeguarding concerns rarely exist in isolation and that early identification is essential in improving outcomes for children.

Where staff believe a child may require additional support, they should report their concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Staff should not delay reporting concerns or assume that another colleague will take action.

Indicators That a Child May Benefit from Additional Support

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, staff should remain professionally curious and be alert to any changes in a child's presentation, behaviour, wellbeing or circumstances that may indicate they require additional support or are at risk of harm. The examples below are not exhaustive, and staff should always seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they have any concerns.

Staff should be particularly alert to children who:

- **Present with additional vulnerabilities,** including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), disabilities, long-term health conditions, mental health needs, pregnancy, parenthood or caring responsibilities.
- **Experience changes in behaviour,** attendance or engagement, including repeated absences, missing education, exclusion, withdrawal, significant changes in presentation or emerging harmful behaviours.
- **May be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation,** including criminal or sexual exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, county lines, radicalisation, domestic abuse, honour-based abuse or other forms of harm.
- **Are affected by adverse family or social circumstances,** including parental substance misuse, mental ill health, domestic abuse, parental imprisonment, homelessness or family

breakdown.

- **Are engaging in behaviours that increase their vulnerability,** including substance misuse, association with individuals or groups involved in criminal or harmful activity, or behaviours that place themselves or others at risk.
- **Display any other change in behaviour, appearance, emotional wellbeing or circumstances that gives cause for concern,** recognising that safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation and that staff should always act on their professional judgement.

By recognising these indicators at the earliest opportunity and responding proportionately, West Thames College aims to ensure that every child receives timely, appropriate support that promotes their safety, wellbeing and educational success whilst preventing concerns from escalating wherever possible.

14. Serious Violence, Exploitation and Child-on-Child Abuse

West Thames College is committed to protecting learners from all forms of abuse, exploitation, violence and harm. The College recognises that safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation and that children may experience multiple and interconnected forms of abuse both within and outside the home, including online.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College adopts a preventative, child-centred and trauma-informed approach, recognising that learners who become involved in violence, exploitation or harmful behaviour are frequently victims of abuse themselves and require safeguarding, support and appropriate intervention.

Serious Violence

The College recognises that serious violence can have a devastating impact on children, young people and communities. Learners may be at risk of becoming victims of violence, carrying weapons or becoming involved in serious criminal activity through coercion, exploitation or peer influence.

Staff should remain alert to indicators including:

- changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance or peer groups;
- possession of weapons or discussions relating to weapons;
- unexplained injuries or fear of particular individuals or locations;
- association with gangs, organised criminal networks or violent behaviour; and
- increased risk-taking, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Where concerns arise, staff must immediately record the concern on MyConcern and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

The College recognises that children may be exploited through criminal activity, sexual exploitation, county lines, organised criminal networks, trafficking, modern slavery or financial exploitation.

Exploitation often involves manipulation, coercion, intimidation, violence or the abuse of power and may occur both in person and online.

Staff should remain professionally curious where learners:

- receive unexplained money, gifts or expensive possessions;
- frequently go missing from education, home or care;
- associate with significantly older individuals or unknown adults;
- display sudden changes in behaviour, wellbeing or presentation;
- become involved in criminal activity or substance misuse; or
- appear fearful, controlled or reluctant to discuss their circumstances.

Child-on-Child Abuse

West Thames College recognises that children can abuse other children and that such behaviour can occur both on and off College premises, including online. Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or simply "children being children."

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying, prejudice-based or discriminatory behaviour, including racist, sexist, homophobic or disability-related abuse;
- physical abuse, serious violence or harmful behaviour;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour;
- technology-facilitated abuse, including the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images without consent;
- coercive or controlling behaviour, abuse within intimate relationships and child-to-parent abuse; and
- behaviour influenced by misogyny, harmful attitudes or Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The College recognises that incidents of child-on-child behaviour exist on a continuum and will respond proportionately to the nature and level of risk presented. Where behaviour constitutes a safeguarding concern, or there is reason to believe that a learner is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm, staff must immediately record the concern on MyConcern and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Where appropriate, incidents such as bullying, discriminatory behaviour or breaches of the College's Standards for Success may also be managed through the Behaviour Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure. Safeguarding and disciplinary processes are not mutually exclusive and may operate concurrently where this is necessary to safeguard learners, address inappropriate behaviour and promote positive outcomes.

All reports will be taken seriously, with appropriate support provided to those affected. The College will consider the needs of the victim, the circumstances of the alleged perpetrator and any wider safeguarding concerns, ensuring that responses are fair, proportionate, restorative where appropriate, and focused on reducing future risk.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns.

Staff must:

- remain professionally curious and respond to any concerns without delay;
- record all safeguarding concerns on MyConcern as soon as possible;
- immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Team where there is a safeguarding concern;
- never assume that another member of staff has taken action;
- contribute to safeguarding plans and multi-agency working where required; and
- promote a culture where learners feel safe, respected and confident to seek help.

West Thames College believes that effective safeguarding is achieved through early identification, timely intervention, partnership working and a culture where every member of staff understands that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

15. Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

West Thames College is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment where every learner is treated with dignity, fairness and respect. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College recognises that a learner's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender reassignment does not, in itself, increase their risk of harm or constitute a safeguarding concern.

However, the College also recognises that some LGBTQ+ learners, and those perceived to be LGBTQ+, may be more likely to experience bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse or social isolation. These experiences can have a significant impact on a learner's wellbeing, mental health, attendance, engagement and ability to achieve their potential.

All staff have a responsibility to foster an inclusive culture where learners feel safe to be themselves, know how to access support and are confident that concerns will be listened to and acted upon. Staff should remain professionally curious, respond sensitively to concerns and recognise that some learners may not have trusted adults or supportive relationships outside of College.

Incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination or prejudice-based behaviour will be addressed promptly and proportionately. Where behaviour presents a safeguarding concern or places a learner at risk of harm, staff must record the concern on MyConcern and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay. Other incidents may be managed through the College's Behaviour Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure, ensuring that all learners are protected, supported and treated fairly.

West Thames College promotes equality, celebrates diversity and is committed to ensuring that every learner feels that they belong, are valued and can thrive within a safe and inclusive College community.

Further guidance and specialist support resources are provided in Appendix 10 – Inclusive Practice and Support Resources.

16. Honour-Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

West Thames College recognises that Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) encompasses a range of harmful practices which are a violation of human rights and may constitute criminal offences. These may include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage, and other forms of abuse committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of an individual, family or community.

All forms of Honour-Based Abuse are safeguarding concerns and will be treated seriously. Staff must remain professionally curious and recognise that learners affected by Honour-Based Abuse may be at immediate risk of significant harm.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK and is recognised as a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

In accordance with the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015), and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, all staff must be aware of the mandatory reporting duty which requires teachers to report known cases of FGM in girls under the age of 18 directly to the Police where:

- a girl discloses that she has undergone FGM; or
- a teacher observes physical signs indicating that FGM has been carried out.

This mandatory reporting duty does not apply to suspicions or concerns. However, where staff have concerns that a learner may be at risk of FGM, they must immediately record the concern on

MyConcern and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team. The DSL will assess the level of risk and make appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police or other relevant agencies where required.

Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse

Forced marriage is distinct from an arranged marriage and occurs where one or both individuals do not consent to the marriage and pressure, coercion, threats or abuse are used.

Staff should remain alert to indicators that a learner may be at risk of Honour-Based Abuse, including:

- concerns about planned overseas travel or extended absences;
- significant changes in behaviour, presentation or emotional wellbeing;
- fear of family members or concerns regarding personal relationships;
- restrictions placed upon a learner's freedom, education or social activities;
- disclosures relating to family or community pressure; or
- any other behaviour that gives rise to safeguarding concerns.

Where concerns arise, **staff must not attempt to mediate with family members or investigate the matter themselves.** All concerns must be recorded on MyConcern and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Team.

West Thames College will work collaboratively with Children's Social Care, the Police and other partner agencies to safeguard learners affected by Honour-Based Abuse, ensuring that appropriate support, intervention and protection are provided.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any member of staff who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk, receives a disclosure, or witnesses' behaviour that may constitute abuse, neglect or exploitation must act immediately.

Staff must:

- ensure the immediate safety of those involved where it is safe to do so;
- report all safeguarding concerns without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team;
- record all concerns, disclosures, incidents and actions taken on MyConcern as soon as possible; and
- never assume that another member of staff has reported the concern.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or a medical emergency, staff should contact the emergency services without delay and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Team as soon as practicable.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for coordinating the College's safeguarding response, making referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies where appropriate, and ensuring effective multi-agency working.

Detailed guidance on responding to disclosures, recording concerns and safeguarding reporting procedures is provided in Appendix 3 – The 5 Rs and Appendix 4 – Safeguarding Reporting Procedure.

Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

West Thames College recognises that safeguarding is most effective when it is preventative, embedded throughout the learner experience and reinforced through positive relationships, education and a culture of respect. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, safeguarding

is delivered through the curriculum, tutorial programme, enrichment activities, employer engagement and wider Student Experience, enabling learners to develop the knowledge, confidence and resilience needed to keep themselves and others safe.

Safeguarding education is age appropriate and is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), vulnerable learners and those who may have experienced abuse or trauma.

The College promotes a culture of inclusion and maintains a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, sexual harassment, misogyny, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and all forms of abusive behaviour. Through the Standards for Success, learners are encouraged to demonstrate respect, responsibility and positive behaviour both within College and in the wider community.

The College's Tutorial Programme provides the primary vehicle for delivering preventative safeguarding education. Working in partnership with curriculum areas and the wider Student Experience Team, learners are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise risk, make informed decisions and seek help when needed. Throughout their programme of study, learners will have opportunities to develop their understanding of:

- healthy relationships, respect, consent, boundaries and recognising abusive or controlling behaviours;
- online safety, digital resilience, media literacy, artificial intelligence (AI), cyber security and the safe use of technology;
- safeguarding risks including exploitation, serious violence, knife crime, county lines, radicalisation, substance misuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG);
- physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing, personal safety and how to access help and support;
- equality, diversity, inclusion and the importance of challenging prejudice, discrimination and harmful behaviours; and
- Shared Values, citizenship, employability and preparing learners to participate safely and positively in modern society.

Safeguarding education is reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects emerging risks, local safeguarding priorities and the needs of the College community. Resources to support the delivery of safeguarding education are available through the College's Tutorial Programme and Appendix 10 – Equality, Inclusion and Specialist Support Resources.

Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring

West Thames College recognises that technology plays an integral role in the lives of learners and that safeguarding extends to both online and offline environments. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the College is committed to providing a safe digital learning environment by promoting online safety, digital resilience and the responsible use of technology.

The College operates appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, aligned with the Department for Education Filtering and Monitoring Standards, to reduce the risk of learners accessing harmful or inappropriate content whilst using College networks and devices. These arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and appropriate to the needs of the College.

The College's online safety arrangements include:

- **Filtering and Monitoring:** The College uses filtering and live monitoring systems to identify and manage safeguarding risks, including exposure to harmful content, radicalisation, online exploitation, bullying and other indicators of risk. Safeguarding concerns identified through these systems are reviewed by the Safeguarding Team and, where appropriate, recorded on MyConcern.

- **Education and Prevention:** Online safety is embedded throughout learners' study programme through the Tutorial Programme, curriculum delivery and wider Student Experience. Learners are supported to develop digital resilience, critical thinking and an understanding of online risks, including the safe and responsible use of social media, emerging technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- **Safe Use of Technology:** Learners and staff are expected to use College systems and personal devices responsibly and in accordance with the College's Standards for Success, Acceptable Use of IT Policy and other relevant College policies. Serious misuse of technology may result in safeguarding intervention and/or disciplinary action.
- **Staff Responsibilities:** All staff are responsible for identifying, responding to and reporting concerns relating to online safety, including cyberbullying, online abuse, the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, online exploitation, radicalisation and exposure to harmful content. All safeguarding concerns must be recorded on MyConcern and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay.
- **Remote and Digital Learning:** Where learning takes place online, the College will ensure that approved platforms are used, safeguarding expectations remain consistent and learners continue to receive appropriate support and protection in digital learning environments.
- **Continuous Review:** The College regularly reviews its filtering, monitoring and online safety arrangements in partnership with Information Technology Services to ensure compliance with statutory guidance, emerging technologies and evolving online risks.

The College recognises that no filtering or monitoring system can eliminate all online risks. Effective safeguarding therefore relies upon a combination of appropriate technical controls, high-quality digital education, staff vigilance and a culture where learners feel confident to report concerns and seek support.

17. Safeguarding Apprentices, Work Experience and Volunteering

West Thames College is committed to ensuring that all learners undertaking apprenticeships, work experience or volunteering are safeguarded whilst participating in learning beyond the College environment. Safeguarding remains a shared responsibility between the College, employers, placement providers and learners, with arrangements proportionate to the learner's age, individual needs, vulnerabilities and the nature of the placement.

The College recognises that safeguarding responsibilities differ for learners under the age of 18 and adult learners. For learners under 18, safeguarding arrangements are managed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. For adult learners, safeguarding arrangements are informed by the Care Act 2014, recognising that adults may also be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and require appropriate safeguarding support.

Apprenticeships

The College and employer share responsibility for safeguarding apprentices throughout their programme.

The College will:

- assess employer suitability and ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place before an apprenticeship commences;
- provide apprentices with safeguarding, Prevent and wellbeing information, including how to report concerns both within the workplace and to the College;
- maintain regular contact with apprentices and employers to monitor welfare, attendance, progress and placement suitability;
- assess, record and manage safeguarding concerns using MyConcern, making referrals to Children's or Adult Social Care, the Police or other agencies where appropriate; and

- work collaboratively with employers and partner agencies to safeguard apprentices throughout their programme.

Employers will:

- provide a safe working environment, appropriate supervision and a culture that promotes the welfare of apprentices;
- identify an appropriately trained member of staff responsible for safeguarding within the workplace;
- ensure apprentices understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns;
- notify the College immediately of any safeguarding concerns, incidents or allegations involving an apprentice; and
- cooperate fully with safeguarding enquiries, investigations and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Work Experience and Volunteering

Work experience and volunteering form an important part of many learners' study programmes and provide valuable opportunities to develop employability skills, confidence and career aspirations. Before, during and after every placement, the College will ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate, proportionate and regularly reviewed.

Before a placement, the College will:

- undertake appropriate employer suitability and safeguarding checks, including consideration of any regulated activity requirements;
- complete a proportionate risk assessment, taking account of the learner's age, vulnerabilities, SEND, health needs, placement activities and supervision arrangements;
- ensure employers understand their safeguarding responsibilities, reporting procedures and duty to notify the College of any concerns;
- provide learners with safeguarding guidance, professional boundaries, expected standards of behaviour and reporting arrangements; and
- ensure learners know how to contact their placement supervisor, Employability Coach (EC) or the College Safeguarding Team at any time during the placement, and are confident in how to raise safeguarding, welfare or health and safety concerns.

During the placement, employers will:

- provide appropriate supervision and maintain a safe, inclusive and respectful working environment;
- monitor the learner's welfare and respond promptly to any safeguarding concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns, incidents or allegations to the College immediately;
- cooperate with safeguarding enquiries and any additional risk management arrangements; and
- notify the College of any significant changes that may affect the learner's safety, wellbeing or placement suitability.

Reporting and Safeguarding Response

All safeguarding concerns arising during an apprenticeship, work experience or volunteering placement must be reported immediately.

College staff, employers and placement providers must:

- take immediate action where there is a risk of harm and contact the emergency services where necessary;
- notify the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay;

- ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded using the College's safeguarding recording system, MyConcern, where appropriate;
- work collaboratively with Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police and other partner agencies where required; and
- never assume that another individual has reported a safeguarding concern.

West Thames College will maintain appropriate oversight of apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering through ongoing communication, learner reviews, employer liaison and safeguarding monitoring, ensuring that placements remain safe, supportive and conducive to positive learner outcomes.

18. Managing Visitors and External Speakers

West Thames College is committed to maintaining a safe, secure and welcoming environment for learners, staff and visitors. All visitors, contractors and external speakers have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk whilst on College premises or participating in College activities.

The College operates robust visitor management arrangements to ensure that all visitors are appropriately authorised, identified and supervised in accordance with safeguarding, health and safety, security and Prevent Duty requirements.

The College will ensure that:

- **Authorisation and Identification:** All visitors are authorised prior to their visit, sign in on arrival, provide identification where required, wear a visitor badge or contractor identification at all times, and sign out before leaving the premises.
- **Safeguarding and Supervision:** Visitors are made aware of the College's safeguarding expectations and will not have unsupervised access to learners unless appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed and this has been authorised by the College.
- **External Speakers and Prevent:** External speakers and organisations delivering activities to learners are subject to appropriate due diligence and risk assessment to ensure that content is suitable, balanced and consistent with the College's values, safeguarding responsibilities and Prevent Duty.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Any visitor who has a safeguarding concern must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Staff must record safeguarding concerns involving visitors on MyConcern in accordance with College procedures.
- **Professional Conduct:** Visitors are expected to behave professionally, comply with College policies and follow any reasonable instructions provided by College staff whilst on site.
- **Monitoring and Compliance:** The College reserves the right to refuse entry, restrict access or terminate a visit where safeguarding, security or welfare concerns are identified.

By maintaining robust visitor management arrangements and effective oversight of external speakers, contractors and visitors, West Thames College helps ensure that learners are protected, safeguarding risks are minimised and the College remains a safe and inclusive environment for all.

19. Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Collaboration

West Thames College recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon timely, accurate and appropriate information sharing. The College works collaboratively with safeguarding partners, including local authorities, Children's and Adult Social Care, the Police, health services, education providers and other relevant agencies, to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk receive coordinated and effective support.

The College is committed to working in partnership with external agencies in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, recognising that no single agency can have a complete picture of an individual's circumstances.

Effective multi-agency collaboration enables concerns to be identified early, risks to be appropriately assessed, and timely interventions to be implemented to safeguard learners.

Information will be shared where it is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (collectively referred to as data protection laws). The College recognises that data protection legislation does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child or adult at risk.

Staff should never allow concerns about sharing information to delay appropriate action where there is a safeguarding concern. Where there is uncertainty, staff should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Decisions regarding information sharing will be based on professional judgement, the level of identified risk and the best interests of the individual, with an appropriate record maintained of the rationale for any decisions made.

The College will actively participate in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, strategy discussions, child protection conferences, Family Help meetings, Child in Need meetings, Team Around the Family meetings, adult safeguarding enquiries and other statutory or multi-agency forums where required. The College will contribute relevant information, implement agreed actions and work collaboratively with partner agencies to promote positive outcomes and reduce the risk of harm.

Our Commitment

West Thames College is committed to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture where every learner feels safe, respected, valued and supported to achieve their potential. Safeguarding is embedded throughout the College's leadership, governance, curriculum, tutorial programme, work experience, apprenticeships and wider student experience, ensuring that the welfare of learners remains central to every decision we make.

We recognise that effective safeguarding depends upon positive relationships, professional curiosity, early intervention and collaborative working. Every member of the College community has a responsibility to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and act without delay to protect learners from harm.

Safeguarding is not solely the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Team, it is a collective responsibility shared by governors, leaders, managers, staff, volunteers, employers, placement providers, learners and partner agencies. By working together, we create an environment where concerns are recognised, listened to and acted upon promptly, enabling learners to access the right support at the right time.

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

At West Thames College, safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to creating a culture where every learner feels safe, respected, valued and supported to achieve their full potential. Through positive relationships, early intervention, professional curiosity and strong partnerships, we strive to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to Belong, Be Happy and Thrive.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Every governor, leader, manager, member of staff, volunteer, employer, placement provider and learner have a role to play in recognising concerns, responding appropriately and promoting a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment where the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk remains paramount.

This policy should be read alongside the College's associated safeguarding procedures, codes of conduct and supporting guidance. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to

legislation, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements require amendment, ensuring that the College's safeguarding arrangements remain effective, compliant and responsive to the evolving needs of our learners and community.

Together, we create a culture where every learner can Belong, Be Happy and Thrive.

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Team

All designated staff (with the exception of the Designated Corporation Member for Safeguarding) can be contacted on the College's dedicated safeguarding email:

Email: safeguardingdisclosure@west-thames.ac.uk, names and contact details are given below:

Designation	Post Held	Name	Extension
Corporation: Strategic Oversight & Assurance	Chair of Governor	Stuart McGeoch	2323
Corporation: Strategic Oversight & Assurance	Safeguarding College Governor	Annita Cornish and George Casely	2323
Executive Accountability: Strategic Safeguarding Oversight (DSL)	Vice Principal	Katrin Lehman	2476
Operational & Strategic Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Director of Student Experience & Safeguarding	Samantha Louisy	6827
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Skills Centre & 14-16)	Director of Skills + Logistic Centre	Beverley McGuire	6850
Staff Allegations	Head of HR	Louise Owen	2296
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) 14-16	Alternative Provision Manager (14-16)	Nicole Kemp	2353
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Skills Centre Support Manager	Sharleen Moore	2407
Safeguarding Officers (DSL)	Safeguarding Officer		2014
Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer	Safeguarding Officer	Lemu Coker	2397
Safeguarding Officer	Student Experience Coordinator	Jaskaran Sidhu	2393
Safeguarding Administrator	Student Experience & Safeguarding Administrator	Ewa Celinska	2076
Policy Implementation & Compliance	Exec. & College Manages	All	

APPENDIX 2A – INDICATORS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT & VULNERABILITY

WHAT STAFF SHOULD BE ALERT TO

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding concerns are not always obvious. Learners may not recognise that they are experiencing abuse or may be unable or unwilling to disclose what is happening.

Staff should remain professionally curious and be alert to changes in a learner's presentation, behaviour, attendance or wellbeing.

The indicators below are not exhaustive and do not necessarily mean abuse has occurred.
However, they may indicate that a learner requires additional support or safeguarding intervention.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained injuries, burns, bruises or marks
- Injuries inconsistent with the explanation
- Fear of physical contact or flinching
- Self-harm
- Aggression or irritability
- Fear of a particular adult

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Anxiety, fear or excessive worry
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Self-criticism or negative self-talk
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Extreme mood swings

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Sexualised language
- Unexplained gifts, money or possessions
- Withdrawal or social isolation
- Depression, self-harm or eating difficulties
- Fear of particular individuals

NEGLECT

- Poor personal hygiene
- Inadequate clothing
- Persistent hunger or tiredness
- Untreated medical needs
- Lack of supervision or basic care
- Poor attendance
- Social isolation
- Unexplained weight loss

EXPLOITATION

- Missing education
- Association with older individuals
- Unexplained money, possessions or mobile phones
- Criminal activity or carrying weapons
- Online or sexual exploitation
- County lines, trafficking or modern slavery

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Anxiety or depression
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Substance misuse
- Eating difficulties
- Difficulty concentrating
- Withdrawal or isolation

ONLINE SAFETY

- Cyberbullying
- Online grooming
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images
- Exposure to harmful content
- Online coercion or threats
- Excessive social media use
- Changes in online behaviour

RADICALISATION & EXTREMISM

- Intolerance of others
- Fixation on extremist views
- Concerning online activity
- Isolation from friends and family
- Sudden changes in beliefs or behaviour

ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

- Child-on-child abuse, serious violence, knife crime and harmful sexual behaviour
- Domestic abuse and abuse within intimate relationships
- Honour-based abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Children missing education or repeated unexplained absences
- Young carers, looked after children, care leavers and learners with SEND
- Financial abuse, abuse of trust and adults at risk

REMEMBER:
Do not investigate or make assumptions.

Notice changes, **listen** without judgement and ask open, supportive questions.

MyConcern

Record your concern on **MyConcern** as soon as possible.

Follow the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure (Appendix 4) **without delay.**

If you are concerned about a learner, report it.
You could be the one who makes a difference.

APPENDIX 2B – POSSIBLE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

The following signs may indicate abuse but are not definitive. They can overlap across different categories, and not all behaviours are indicative of abuse.

Students with learning difficulties may display some of these signs, which might be related to their condition rather than abuse.

Disabled learners are at greater risk of abuse or neglect compared to their non-disabled peers.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained or "accidental" injuries, burns or bruises
- Inconsistent or unlikely explanations for injuries
- Reluctance to undress for sports activities or practical activities
- Self-harming behaviours
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact or flinching when touched
- Admission of excessive punishment
- Fear of contact with a suspected abuser

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Delays in physical, mental or emotional development
- Sudden speech or communication issues
- Frequent self-criticism or negative self-talk
- Overreaction to minor mistakes
- Extreme fear or anxiety in new situations
- Inappropriate response to pain or punishment
- Unusual attention-seeking behaviour
- Extreme mood swings, ranging from passive to aggressive

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour for the child's age
- Pain or discomfort in the genital area
- Severe emotional responses such as depression, self-harm or eating disorders
- Noticeable personality changes (e.g. increased insecurity, clinginess)
- Withdrawal or social isolation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety about clothing being removed
- Drawing or discussing sexually explicit content
- Striving to be overly compliant or perfect; overreacting to criticism

NEGLECT

- Persistent hunger or food insecurity
- Poor personal hygiene and unsuitable clothing
- Constant fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss or emaciation
- Untreated medical issues
- Lack of social interactions or relationships
- Compulsive scavenging or stealing food
- Destructive behaviours
- Poor school/college attendance
- Excessive attention-seeking behaviour

REMEMBER

- Abuse rarely presents with one sign alone.
- Changes over time are often more significant than one isolated incident.
- Professional curiosity is essential.
- Every learner is individual – look at context, not just behaviour.

MyConcern

If you are concerned about a learner, do not investigate or make assumptions.

Record your concern on MyConcern and follow the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure (Appendix 4) without delay.

APPENDIX 3 – DETECTING, RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING

EVERY CONCERN MATTERS. EARLY ACTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Safeguarding is about promoting wellbeing and protecting learners from harm. Concerns can be small, significant or complex.

If in doubt, report it. You do not need all the facts – it is not your responsibility to investigate or decide.

THE 5 RS – WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

1 RECOGNISE

- Be alert to changes in presentation, behaviour, attendance or circumstances.
- Listen to what learners say.
- Notice indicators of risk – see Appendix 2A.

You do not need to be certain. Trust your instincts.

2 RESPOND

- Respond calmly and reassuringly.
- Listen without judgement.
- Reassure the learner they have done the right thing.
- Do not ask leading questions.

Your response can help a learner feel safe and heard.

3 RECORD

- Make a factual record as soon as possible on MyConcern.
- Include direct quotes where possible.
- Record what was said, seen, heard and done.

Accurate recording supports effective safeguarding.

4 REFER

- Submit your concern on MyConcern.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- They will consider the next steps and whether any immediate action is required.

Do not delay. Always share your concern.

5 REVIEW

- The DSL/Safeguarding Team will assess the concern and decide on appropriate action.
- You may be asked for further information.
- The case will be managed, monitored and reviewed.

Teamwork ensures learners get the right support at the right time.

IF A LEARNER IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM:

- Call 999 in an emergency.
- Call 101 for non-emergencies.
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Record the concern on MyConcern.

WHO TO CONTACT

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Director of Student Experience & Safeguarding

Safeguarding Officers
Members of the Safeguarding Team

Safeguardingdisclosures@west-thames.ac.uk
(Safeguarding Team inbox)

MYCONCERN

MyConcern

Always use **MyConcern** to record safeguarding concerns promptly and accurately.

A clear record helps us protect learners and support effective action.

QUICK REMINDERS

Do not investigate or make assumptions.
It is not your role to decide if abuse has happened.

Keep information confidential.
Share only with those who need to know.

Consider immediate safety.
If a learner is at immediate risk, follow emergency procedures.

Be inclusive and culturally aware.
Respect diversity and individual circumstances.

Follow the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure (Appendix 4).
It provides full guidance on what to do.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Child/learner centred approach
- Act early, stay curious
- Do not ignore or delay
- Work together with partners
- Record, share, support

YOUR ACTION COULD CHANGE A LIFE.

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED, REPORT IT.

APPENDIX 4 – SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURE

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN – ACT PROMPTLY, RECORD ACCURATELY, REPORT IMMEDIATELY

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Safeguarding is about promoting wellbeing and protecting learners from harm.
Concerns can be small, significant or complex.

If in doubt, report it.
Do not investigate. Do not promise confidentiality. Do not delay.

1 LISTEN

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Allow the learner to speak.
- Reassure them they have done the right thing.

- ✕ Do not promise confidentiality.
- ✕ Do not investigate.
- ✕ Do not ask leading questions.

2 RESPOND

Explain that:

"I cannot keep this confidential because my role is to help keep you safe. I will only share this information with people who need to know."

If the learner does not wish to continue:

Encourage them to speak with:

- Safeguarding Team
- Student Learning Advisor
- College Counsellor

If you remain concerned about their safety, report the concern anyway.

3 RECORD

Immediately record **MyConcern**

Include:

- Learner's own words
- Date
- Time
- Location
- People present
- What you observed
- Actions taken

Do not include opinions.
Do not delay recording.

4 REPORT

Submit immediately to the **Safeguarding Team** via **MyConcern**

If there is an immediate risk of harm:

Contact 999 immediately

then notify the Safeguarding Team.

MyConcern will send you a receipt to confirm your report has been submitted.

5 FOLLOW UP

- A member of the Safeguarding Team will acknowledge your report.
- They will decide the next steps and manage the concern.
- Continue to provide support to the learner as appropriate.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Safeguarding Team will:

- Assess the concern and decide the level of risk.
- Speak with the learner where appropriate.
- Consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Make referrals where necessary.
- Ensure the learner receives appropriate support.
- Record all decisions and actions on MyConcern.

Referrals may include:

- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Prevent / Channel
- Health Services
- Adult Social Care
- Early Help / Family Help

All information is handled confidentially and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.
Information is only shared with those who need to know.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Parents / Carers
If concerns are raised by a parent or carer, follow the same reporting procedure.

Work Experience & Apprenticeships
Employers must report safeguarding concerns immediately to the College. Learners should contact their Placement Supervisor or Employability Coach / Apprenticeship Team, or the Safeguarding Team.

Learners Under 16
Where safeguarding responsibility is shared with a commissioning school or partner organisation, the College will work jointly with the school to ensure concerns are managed promptly in accordance with agreed safeguarding arrangements.

KEY REMINDERS

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**
- **Do not investigate or make assumptions.**
- **Report concerns immediately – do not delay.**
- **Record accurately on MyConcern.**
- **If in doubt, seek advice from the Safeguarding Team.**

REMEMBER: Do not investigate. | Do not promise confidentiality. | Report immediately. | Record accurately on MyConcern.

IF IN DOUBT, SEEK ADVICE FROM THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM.

APPENDIX 5 – PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

Our priority is the safety and welfare of learners. Allegations will be handled fairly, quickly and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 4) and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

1. RECEIVING AND RECORDING ALLEGATIONS

1 REPORTING

If you receive an allegation about a member of staff from a child or vulnerable adult, report it immediately.

Report to:

- Your Manager
- Head of HR & Professional Development
- Principal

If these individuals are implicated, report to the Chair of the Corporation.

2 DOCUMENTATION

Obtain and write down details of the allegation including:

- Times, dates, locations
- What was said or observed
- Potential witnesses

The record must be signed and dated by the person receiving the information and countersigned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3 ASSESSMENT

An initial assessment must be carried out in consultation with:

- The Safeguarding Partner or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

If the allegation involves potential criminal activity or significant harm, report to the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership.

4 NEXT STEPS DECIDED BY SENIOR LEADERSHIP

The Head of HR, Principal or Executive Director decides the next steps.

They will not investigate the allegation themselves.

If external agencies are involved, the Principal or DSL will contribute to strategy discussions and ensure confidentiality.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The safety and wellbeing of learners is our priority.
- All allegations are taken seriously and handled sensitively and fairly.
- Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Records must be accurate, objective and factual.

2. HANDLING THE ALLEGATION

INVESTIGATION

- The Head of HR, Principal or Executive Director decides on the next steps.
- An internal inquiry will be carried out in line with the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy.
- The person making the allegation (and their parents if under 18) will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
- Consider what information should be shared with the College community.

SUSPENSION

- Suspension is not automatic but may be considered at any stage.
- Follow the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy and consult with external authorities where necessary.
- The suspended staff member will be informed, treated fairly, and provided with appropriate support and updates.

DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION

- Conduct internal inquiries in accordance with the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy.
- Inform the person making the allegation (and their parents if under 18) of the outcome of the investigation.
- Consider carefully what information, if any, should be shared with the wider College community.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Staff who are involved in a safeguarding case (including the person who is the subject of an allegation) can access confidential support.

- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for confidential advice.
- Contact HR for a referral to our trained counselling service.

We are committed to supporting the wellbeing of all our staff.

3. UNSUBSTANTIATED OR FALSE ALLEGATIONS

- Record and evaluate unsubstantiated, malicious or false allegations.
- Consider referring the case to the LADO if appropriate.
- Inform the accused staff member.
- Consider whether support should be offered.
- Record the findings and actions taken.

4. RESIGNATIONS

If a staff member resigns during an investigation, the College will continue to follow up on the allegation to ensure child welfare is addressed.

5. REFERRAL TO THE DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

If a staff member is considered to have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or poses a risk of harm, the College will refer them to the DBS.

For teachers, also consider referring the case to the Teaching Agency for serious misconduct.

6. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS (APPENDIX 6)

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold should still be recorded and managed in line with the College's procedure for managing low-level concerns.

These help us identify patterns and provide early support.

IMPORTANT

Always seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if you are unsure.
If a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 and inform the Safeguarding Team without delay.

Safeguarding Team inbox:
Safeguardingdisclosures@west-thames.ac.uk

APPENDIX 6 – GUIDANCE ON THE CONDUCT OF COLLEGE STAFF

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The College acknowledges that it is not feasible to provide specific instructions for every possible scenario involving children or vulnerable adults. The following standards outline the expected behaviour for staff to protect both individuals and themselves. These guidelines also apply to volunteers, visitors and contractors.

STAFF MUST:

- Adhere to this protocol consistently.
- Be vigilant to potential risks at all times.
- Take reasonable precautions when interviewing students, such as having another person present and ensuring the meeting occurs in an observable location.

REMEMBER

- Your behaviour sets the standard and protects students, colleagues and yourself.
- If you are ever unsure about a situation, seek advice from the Safeguarding Team.
- Report all concerns or breaches immediately using the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure (Appendix 4).
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Share information only with those who need to know.

STAFF MUST NEVER:

- Develop personal relationships with students beyond a professional teacher–student dynamic.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact. Touch should be responsive to the student's needs, suitable for their age and development, and always with their consent.
- Participate in rough play or physical games with students.
- Perform tasks of a personal nature that students can do independently or that should be done by a parent.
- Use physical restraint except to prevent harm. Restraint must be appropriate and reasonable to avoid being deemed assault.
- Make sexually suggestive comments in the presence of or within earshot of students.
- Transport a learner alone in a vehicle unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any exception must be discussed and authorised, wherever practicable, by your line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with the rationale recorded. The learner's parent/carer (where appropriate) should also be informed. Where prior authorisation is not possible due to an emergency, the line manager and DSL must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable after the event. Staff must ensure they are appropriately insured for business use.
- Assist a student with personal hygiene unless another adult is present or informed, as specified in the student's personal plan.
- Spend time alone with a student outside the regular educational setting. If alone with a student, ensure visibility to others.
- Communicate with students through personal electronic channels such as social media, email or text. Professional communication should be conducted through College-approved systems.

Creating a safe, respectful and supportive environment is everyone's responsibility.

If a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 and inform the Safeguarding Team without delay.

Safeguarding Team inbox:
Safeguardingdisclosures@west-thames.ac.uk

APPENDIX 7A – PREVENT RADICALISATION

The College is committed to safeguarding students and staff from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS

EXTREMISM

Active opposition to fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for different faiths and beliefs. This includes advocating violence against the armed forces.

RADICALISATION

The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

TERRORISM

Actions that involve serious violence against people, damage to property or disruption to systems, intended to influence government or intimidate the public for political, religious or ideological objectives.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF RADICALISATION

There is no single indicator of susceptibility to extremist ideologies, but staff should be alert to a range of signs, considering the student's background, influences and the methods used to target individuals (e.g. social media).

- Changes in behaviour, mood or personality
- Withdrawal from friends, family or usual activities
- Increased time spent online on extremist websites or social media
- Expressing extremist views or justifying violence
- Increasingly rigid or extreme views, with little tolerance for different opinions or beliefs
- New associations with extremist groups or influences
- Accessing, possessing or sharing extremist material

If you are ever unsure, report your concerns.
It is better to report than to ignore.

WHAT TO DO

FOR STUDENTS

Concerned about another student?
Check with your Student Learning Advisor (SLA) and share with the Safeguarding Team.

Concerned about a staff member or a guest?
Check with the Safeguarding Team or share with the DSL, Vice Principal or Head of HR & Professional Development.

FOR STAFF

Concerned about a student?
Check with and share concerns with the Safeguarding Team.

Concerned about another staff member?
Check with your Line Manager and share with the Head of HR & Professional Development and Executive Director.

Concerned about a non-staff individual?
Check with and share concerns with the Director of Student Experience.

REFERRAL PROTOCOL – HOW CONCERNS ARE MANAGED

1 RAISING CONCERNS

If you suspect a student or colleague might be vulnerable to radicalisation, report your concerns to a Safeguarding Team Member.

Do not approach the individual.

2 INITIAL ASSESSMENT

A member of the Safeguarding Team will assess the risk and gather further information without contacting the individual initially.

3 FURTHER ACTION

If the risk is deemed credible, the Safeguarding Member will consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Executive Director. For staff concerns, the Head of HR & Professional Development will be involved.

4 EXTERNAL REPORTING

If necessary, the matter will be reported to the local Prevent Coordinator for further advice.

5 POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- The issue may be resolved without further action.
- A background investigation by the police may be conducted.
- The case may be referred to the local Channel Panel, which will assess the risk and develop a tailored support plan if the individual is deemed at risk.

IMPORTANT

- The College will follow the Prevent Coordinator's guidance and will only approach the individual if directed to do so.
- All information will be treated confidentially and shared only with those who need to know.
- Records of concerns, assessments and actions will be kept securely in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Everyone has a responsibility to protect and safeguard others from the risk of radicalisation.

REMEMBER

You can help by being vigilant, reporting concerns and promoting a culture of respect, inclusion and understanding.

If a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 and inform the Safeguarding Team without delay.

Safeguarding Team inbox:
Safeguardingdisclosures@west-thames.ac.uk

The Channel Process within FE Colleges (Prevent) also applies to WTC sub-contractors and partner organisations.

APPENDIX 7B – THE CHANNEL PROCESS

Within FE Colleges (Prevent)

1. Cause for concern identified

2. Concern reported to Safeguarding Lead

3. Safeguarding Lead gathers more information

4. Discussion with local Prevent police / local authority officer

5. Screening Process
Police Channel Coordinator gathers information to determine whether there is a specific risk of radicalisation, and that the referral is not malicious.

6. Preliminary Assessment
The Local Authority Prevent lead and Police Channel Coordinator consult with colleagues to decide whether the referral meets the threshold for Channel.

7. Multi-Agency Channel Panel Meeting
Panel discusses and assesses the risk, identifies support needs and determines whether specialist Channel support is necessary.

8. Channel Support Package
Tailored support commissioned from approved Channel intervention providers, selected as being appropriate for the person.

9. Person exits the Channel process

Not appropriate
No evidence of radicalisation or extremism.

Immediate Risk
Safeguarding Lead contacts emergency services.

Checking Process
Police check if referral is already part of live investigation.

Monitoring
The Channel Panel monitors the progress with the provider and other safeguarding professionals.

NOT APPROPRIATE FOR CHANNEL

NOT APPROPRIATE FOR CHANNEL

CHANNEL INTERVENTION NOT REQUIRED

Referrer informed of decision and person referred to other existing safeguarding panels for support

- MAPPA
- Gangs Unit Triage
- MASH
- Serious Case Review Panel

Referral may later be made back to Channel if deemed necessary

The College will follow the Prevent Coordinator's guidance and will only approach the individual if directed to do so.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

The Channel Process within FE Colleges (Prevent) also applies to WTC sub-contractors and partner organisations.

Safeguarding Team inbox:
Safeguardingdisclosures@west-thames.ac.uk

APPENDIX 8
NOTIFICATIONS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NOIDs)

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

PURPOSE

West Thames College is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of learners, staff and visitors. Certain infectious diseases are legally notifiable under public health legislation and require prompt reporting to enable appropriate public health action.

The College will work closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), local Public Health teams and other relevant agencies to manage any suspected or confirmed cases.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

If you become aware that a learner, member of staff or visitor may have a notifiable infectious disease, you should:

- Report the concern immediately to the Director of Student Experience and/or the Head of Human Resources.
- Maintain confidentiality and only share information with those who need to know.
- Follow any advice issued by Public Health, UKHSA or College management.
- Do not provide medical advice or disclose information to others without authorisation.
- Support the implementation of any control measures introduced by the College.
- Record any actions taken where appropriate.

COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Where appropriate, the College may be required to:

- Work with UKHSA and local Public Health teams.
- Provide relevant information to support public health investigations.
- Implement infection prevention and control measures.
- Support exclusion or return-to-college arrangements where advised.
- Communicate with learners, parents/ carers and staff where necessary.

EXAMPLES OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Examples include:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Meningitis
- Meningococcal Septicaemia
- Diphtheria
- Food Poisoning
- Malaria

This list is not exhaustive. For the current list of notifiable diseases, refer to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance.

REPORT IMMEDIATELY

If you have concerns about a notifiable infectious disease, contact:

Director of Student Experience and/or Head of Human Resources

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information will only be shared with those who need to know and in line with data protection and public health requirements.

Appendix 9 – Related College Policies, Procedures and Statutory Guidance

This Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside the following College policies, procedures and statutory guidance. The most up-to-date College documents are available on Connect.

College Policies and Procedures

Safeguarding and Student Support

- Positive Behaviour and Student Conduct Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- Apprenticeship Policy
- Searching Learners and Confiscation Procedure
- Physical Intervention and Restrictive Practice Guidance
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies (Staff and Learners)
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Procedure

Employment and Recruitment

- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Safer Recruitment Guidance
- Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy

Safeguarding Resources

- Safeguarding Reporting Procedure
- Safeguarding Quick Guide for Staff
- Prevent Guidance for Staff
- Partner Provider and Co-located Provider Safeguarding Policies (where applicable)

Statutory Guidance and National Resources

The College has regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working together to Safeguard Children
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Information Sharing
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance (where applicable)
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes: How to respond to an Incident
- Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring
- Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults county lines
- Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls (accessible)
- London Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Disclosure and Barring Service

Local Safeguarding Procedures

The College also follows local safeguarding arrangements, including:

- Hounslow Thresholds and Referral Protocol and HSCP Escalation Policy
- Toolkit 1: UKHSA structures and functions - GOV.UK

Appendix 10: Inclusive Practice and Support Resources

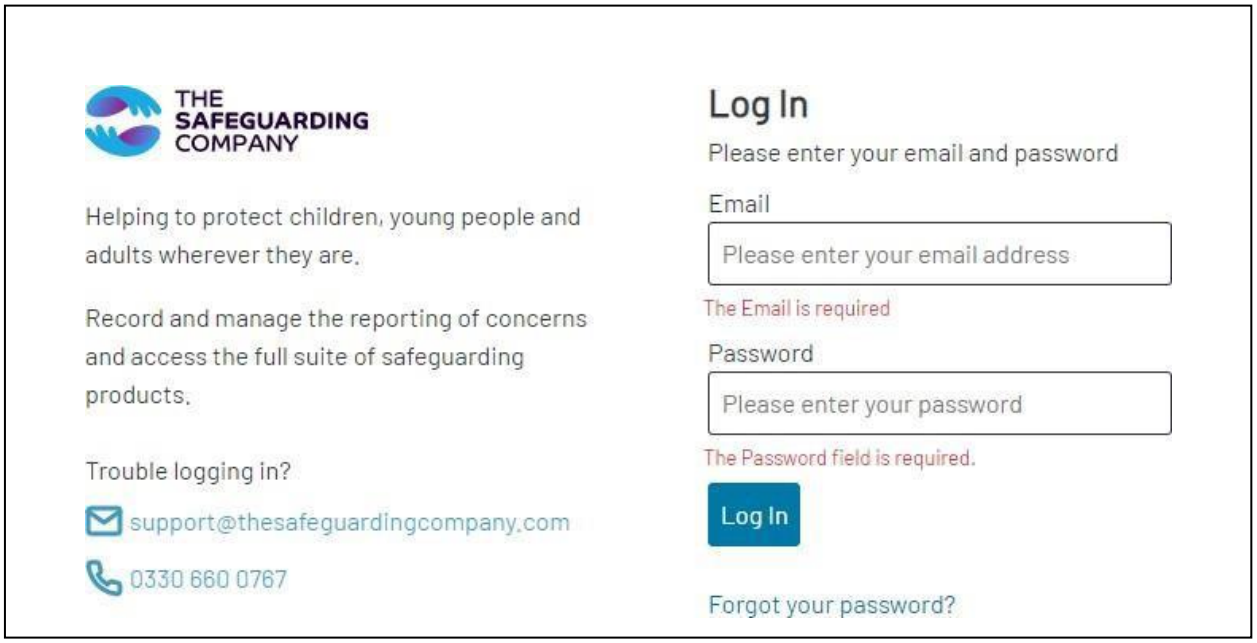
- DfE advice for schools: Teaching online safety in schools
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education for a connected world
- UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people
- The UKCIS external visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: thinkuknow
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.
- LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health-education

Appendix 11: Myconcern

MyConcern is a secure platform for recording and managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring staff can communicate their worries effectively and access policy guidance easily.

You will receive an email invitation with a link to the MyConcern login screen. Use your email address as the username to create your initial password. After logging in, you'll be directed to the

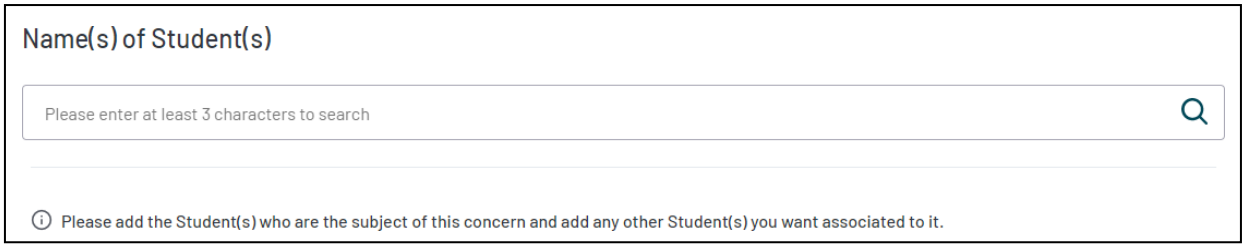
Home Page where you can report concerns.



Under *"My Establishments"* click West Thames College. A red button will appear *"Report a Concern"*

*Select **'Report a Concern'** from the Home Page and complete the on-screen form. There is guidance on how to fill this in when you click on the individual sections.*

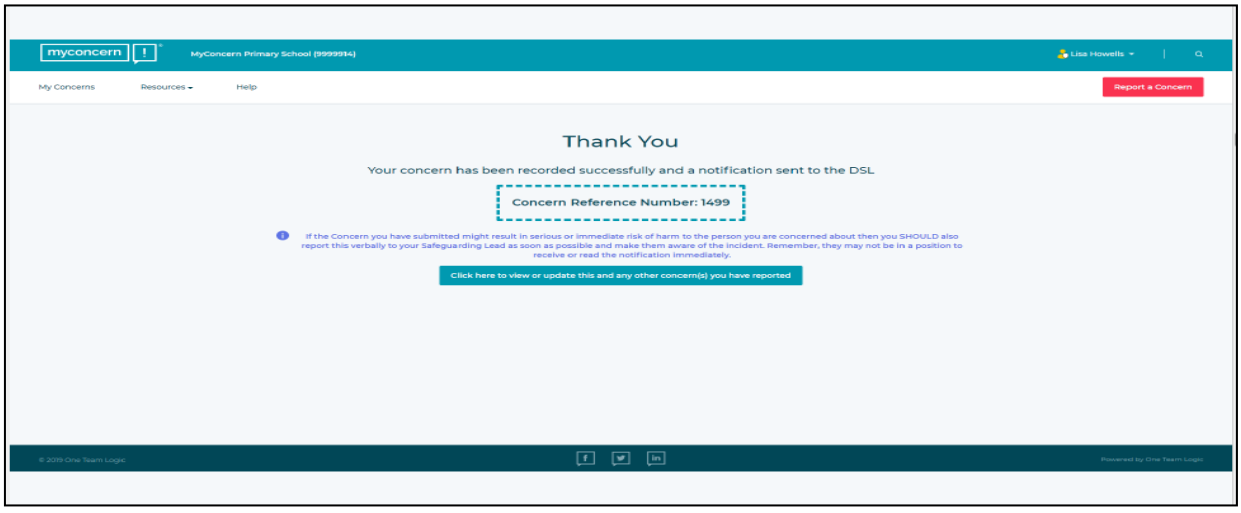
Start typing a student's name and then PAUSE – Click on the relevant name from the drop-down list.



Concern Type: (Mental, Emotional, Physical Health, Neglect, Domestic Violence, Sexual Exploitation, Cyber-Bullying, FGM, Forced Marriage, Radicalisation)

If required you will also have the option to submit documents by uploading them.

Once you have submitted your concern the system will forward an automated email notification to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and you will see an on-screen receipt with a reference number for your concern.



Please note: The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) may not be in a position to view the notification immediately. If the concern you are reporting is of an urgent nature then it is recommended that you contact the Safeguarding Officer on duty.

For instant access MyConcern has been placed on CONNECT.

Appendix 12 – Case Study

Case Study: Rebecca

Rebecca (Age 16)

Rebecca, aged 16, waits behind after her tutorial and asks if she can speak to you privately.
She explains that since her mother's new partner moved into the family home, things have become increasingly difficult. Her mother works long hours and is often away during evenings and weekends, leaving Rebecca responsible for her two younger brothers.

Rebecca tells you that she regularly prepares meals, gets her brothers ready for school, cares for them when they are unwell and puts them to bed. She says there is often very little food in the house and she sometimes skips meals so her brothers can eat.

Over the past few weeks, you have noticed that Rebecca appears tired in lessons, has become quieter than usual, has struggled to concentrate and has recently missed several tutorial sessions. She tells you she is worried about her family but asks you not to tell anyone because she is afraid her brothers will be taken away.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- What indicators of abuse or neglect can you recognise?
- What additional information, if any, would you seek without investigating?
- How would you respond to Rebecca's request to keep the information confidential?
- What immediate actions should you take?
- Who should you report the concern to?
- How should the concern be recorded?
- What support might Rebecca and her family require?

Learning Points

This scenario may indicate:

- neglect;
- young carer responsibilities;
- possible food insecurity;
- emotional harm;
- parentification (where a child assumes the responsibilities of an adult);
- potential need for Targeted Early Help (Family Help) or referral to Children's Social Care, depending on the level of identified risk.

Rebecca's request for confidentiality should be managed sensitively. Staff should explain that information cannot be kept confidential where there are safeguarding concerns and must follow the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure, recording the concern on MyConcern without delay.

Case Study: Tunde

Tunde (Age 16)

Tunde, aged 16, arrives at college with a visible cut beneath his right eye. During a conversation with you, he explains that he argued with his father after taking food from the fridge. He says the argument became physical and that his father struck him. Tunde also tells you that his father was injured during the incident, adding that *"he came off worse than I did."*

Over recent weeks, staff have noticed that Tunde has become increasingly withdrawn. His attendance has started to decline, he appears tired in lessons and has become reluctant to speak about home. When asked if he feels safe, Tunde shrugs and says, *"It's just how things are at home."*

He asks you not to tell anyone because he is worried that his father will get into trouble and that things will become worse if anyone finds out.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- What additional indicators or risks are present beyond the visible injury?
- How would you respond to Tunde's request to keep the information confidential?
- What immediate actions should you take to ensure Tunde's safety?
- How should this concern be recorded?
- Who should be informed?
- What support may be required for Tunde both immediately and in the longer term?

Learning Points

This scenario may indicate:

- physical abuse;
- domestic abuse within the family home;
- emotional abuse;
- neglect of emotional wellbeing;
- escalating family conflict;
- possible food insecurity; and
- a child who may require statutory safeguarding intervention.

The visible injury should not be viewed in isolation. Staff should consider the wider context, including Tunde's presentation, attendance, emotional wellbeing and disclosure. Staff should reassure Tunde, explain that they cannot promise confidentiality where there are safeguarding concerns, and follow the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure by recording the concern on MyConcern without delay.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk and determine the appropriate course of action, which may include consultation with or referral to Children's Social Care, the Police or other safeguarding partners where the threshold for statutory intervention is met.

Case Study: Maria

Maria (Age 32)

Maria is a 32-year-old adult learner attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes at West Thames College.

Over recent weeks, staff have noticed that Maria appears increasingly anxious and withdrawn. She has become quieter in class, frequently checks her mobile phone, and has missed several sessions without explanation.

Following class, Maria asks if she can speak to you privately. She explains that her partner controls where she goes, who she speaks to and how money is spent. She says she is rarely allowed to leave the house alone and has been threatened if she tells anyone about her situation or attempts to leave.

Maria's English is limited and she is worried that she will not be understood or believed. She says she has no family in the UK and asks you not to tell anyone because she is frightened of what might happen if her partner finds out.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- What additional vulnerabilities may increase Maria's risk?
- How would you respond to Maria's request for confidentiality?
- What immediate actions should you take?
- How should the concern be recorded?
- Who should the concern be reported to?
- What support or specialist services may be appropriate?

Learning Points

This scenario may indicate:

- domestic abuse;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- emotional and psychological abuse;
- financial abuse;
- social isolation;
- barriers created by limited English proficiency; and
- an adult who may require safeguarding support and referral to specialist services.

Although Maria is an adult learner, safeguarding responsibilities remain. Staff should respond sensitively, avoid making assumptions, and explain that information cannot be kept confidential where there are concerns about her safety or the safety of others.

The concern should be recorded promptly on MyConcern and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. The Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk and, with Maria's involvement wherever appropriate, consider referrals to specialist domestic abuse services, Adult Social Care, the Police or other support agencies.

The College will adopt a person-centred approach, empowering Maria to make informed decisions wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, while balancing this with its duty of care and safeguarding responsibilities.

Case Study: PREVENT Case Study One

Jack (Age 18)

Jack is an 18-year-old student studying a Level 3 ICT programme. He has always been punctual, engaged and popular with his classmates.

Over several weeks, his teachers notice a significant change in his behaviour. Jack has become increasingly isolated and frequently makes comments suggesting that certain groups of people are responsible for society's problems. During discussions, he dismisses alternative opinions and describes violence as "sometimes necessary to make people listen."

Several students report feeling uncomfortable after Jack shares videos promoting conspiracy theories and extremist content through private online groups. He has also started displaying symbols associated with extremist movements on his personal belongings and has become increasingly hostile towards classmates who challenge his views.

When spoken to informally, Jack insists that he has *"finally found people who understand what's really happening"* and says that mainstream news cannot be trusted.

There is no evidence that Jack intends to commit an offence. However, staff are concerned by the significant changes in his behaviour, increasing social isolation, exposure to extremist online content and increasingly intolerant attitudes.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- Which changes in Jack's behaviour may indicate vulnerability to radicalisation?
- Why is it important to focus on behaviour rather than ideology alone?
- How should staff respond to these concerns?
- How should the concern be recorded?
- Who should the concern be reported to?
- What support might be appropriate?

Learning Points

This scenario demonstrates that radicalisation can affect individuals from any background and can be associated with a range of ideologies, including extreme right-wing, Islamist, mixed, conspiracy-based or other forms of extremism.

No single behaviour confirms radicalisation. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider changes in behaviour, social isolation, online activity, increasingly intolerant attitudes and exposure to extremist narratives within the wider safeguarding context.

Concerns should be recorded on MyConcern and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. The Safeguarding Team will assess the information, determine the level of risk and, where appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority Prevent Team or consider referral to Channel.

Support may include pastoral intervention, mentoring, wellbeing support, opportunities to develop critical thinking and media literacy, and engagement with positive activities that promote inclusion, respect and democratic values.

PREVENT Case Study Two

Ahmed (Age 17)

Ahmed is a 17-year-old student studying a Level 3 Business programme. He recently joined the College following a difficult period at school and initially found it challenging to settle in. Although polite and respectful, Ahmed has few friends and often talks about feeling isolated and that he "doesn't really fit in."

Over the past month, his SLA/Tutor notices that Ahmed has become increasingly secretive about who he spends time with outside College. He has started missing tutorials and enrichment activities and frequently leaves campus immediately after lessons to meet a group of older individuals he describes as *"people who finally understand me."*

Ahmed tells staff that these new friends have helped him find *"a real purpose"* and that they have encouraged him to stop mixing with certain classmates because they are *"holding him back."*

When asked about the group, Ahmed becomes evasive and says they have shown him information that has *"opened his eyes."* He is reluctant to discuss them further and asks staff not to mention them to anyone.

There is no evidence that Ahmed has committed an offence or expressed extremist views. However, staff are concerned that he may be vulnerable to grooming and undue influence.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?

- What vulnerabilities may be increasing Ahmed's risk?
- Why is it important to focus on changes in behaviour rather than beliefs or assumptions?
- How should staff respond to Ahmed's request for confidentiality?
- How should the concern be recorded?
- Who should the concern be reported to?
- What support may be appropriate?

Learning Points

This scenario demonstrates that individuals vulnerable to radicalisation are often targeted through grooming, isolation, friendship, identity, belonging or a search for purpose, rather than ideology alone.

The concern is not Ahmed's religion, culture or background, but the significant changes in his behaviour, increasing secrecy, association with unknown adults, withdrawal from positive relationships and possible exposure to harmful influences.

Staff should remain professionally curious, avoid making assumptions and record concerns promptly on MyConcern. The Safeguarding Team will assess the information, determine the level of risk and, where appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority Prevent Team or consider referral to Channel.

Support may include pastoral intervention, mentoring, wellbeing support, opportunities to strengthen positive peer relationships and activities that promote belonging, resilience and critical thinking.

Case Study: Apprenticeship

Sophie (Age 19)

Sophie is a 19-year-old apprentice working four days a week with a local employer whilst attending College for her off-the-job training.

During a routine progress review, Sophie appears unusually anxious and distracted. She tells her Assessor that her line manager regularly sends personal text messages outside working hours and often asks her to stay behind after everyone else has left. Sophie says the comments initially seemed complimentary but have become increasingly personal and make her feel uncomfortable.

She is worried that if she raises the issue with her employer, it may affect her apprenticeship or future employment. She asks you not to tell anyone.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- What additional information would be helpful without investigating?
- How would you respond to Sophie's request for confidentiality?
- What immediate actions should you take?
- Who should the concern be reported to?
- What support may Sophie require?
- What responsibilities does the employer have?

Learning Points

This scenario may indicate:

- abuse of trust;
- sexual harassment;
- inappropriate professional boundaries;
- potential sexual exploitation;
- concerns relating to workplace safeguarding.

The concern should be recorded on MyConcern and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. The Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk and work collaboratively with the employer, ensuring that Sophie's safety and wellbeing remain the priority throughout the apprenticeship.

Case Study: Work Experience

Lewis (Age 16)

Lewis is a 16-year-old learner undertaking a one-week work experience placement arranged by the College.

During a routine placement review, Lewis tells his Employability Coach that he enjoys the placement but says one member of staff regularly shouts at him in front of customers, calls him *"useless"* and expects him to complete tasks without any training or supervision.

Lewis also explains that he has twice been asked to use equipment he has not been shown how to operate safely. He says he feels uncomfortable but does not want to complain because he is worried, he will fail his placement.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding and health and safety concerns have been identified?
- What immediate action should be taken?
- Should the placement continue whilst concerns are investigated?
- Who should the concern be reported to?
- What support should Lewis receive?

Learning Points

This scenario highlights the shared safeguarding responsibilities between the College and placement provider.

Concerns may relate to:

- emotional abuse;
- inappropriate supervision;
- unsafe working practices;
- learner welfare;
- employer compliance.

The concern should be recorded on MyConcern and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. The College should review the suitability of the placement, liaise with the employer and, where necessary, suspend or end the placement until appropriate safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are in place.

Case Study: High Needs Learner

Daniel (Age 18)

Daniel is an 18-year-old learner with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). He has autism and mild learning disabilities and is supported by the Inclusion team.

Over several weeks, staff notice that Daniel has become quieter than usual and increasingly reluctant to attend College. During a tutorial, he tells his Student Learning Advisor that another learner has persuaded him to hand over money on several occasions and has threatened to *"make life difficult"* if he refuses.

Daniel says he thought the other learner was his friend and did not realise he was being taken advantage of until recently. He asks staff not to tell anyone because he is worried about losing the friendship.

Discussion Points

Consider:

- What safeguarding concerns have been identified?
- How might Daniel's additional needs increase his vulnerability?
- What immediate action should be taken?
- What support may Daniel require?
- Who should be involved in planning ongoing support?

Learning Points

This scenario may indicate:

- financial abuse;
- bullying;
- coercion;
- exploitation of a vulnerable learner;
- possible child-on-child abuse.

Learners with SEND or an EHCP may have additional barriers to recognising abuse, communicating concerns or understanding that they are being exploited. Staff should take account of Daniel's communication needs and ensure he receives appropriate support throughout the safeguarding process.

The concern should be recorded on MyConcern and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. The Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk, implement appropriate safeguarding measures and work with curriculum staff, the High Needs team, parents/carers (where appropriate) and external agencies to reduce the risk of further harm.