

London Brookes College Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Policy statement

This policy applies wherever staff are working with students even when this is away from the College. This policy applies to all children and young people under the age of 18. Every student should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

London Brookes College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The College will take all reasonable measures to:

- *ensure that we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance given in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students Under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges*
- *ensure that we carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve as the College's directors in accordance with the above regulations, guidance given in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education and the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students Under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges*
- *ensure that where the College ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children/young people, a prompt and detailed report is made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)*
- *ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our students on another site, we have received assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff*
- *follow the local inter-agency procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board*
- *protect each student from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another student*
- *be alert to signs of abuse both in the College and from outside*
- *deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse*
- *design and operate procedures which promote this policy*
- *design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations*
- *support children/young people who have been abused in accordance with his / her agreed child protection plan*
- *be alert to the medical needs of children and young people with medical condition*
- *operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures*
- *take all practicable steps to ensure that College premises are as secure as circumstances permit*
- *operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse*
- *consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children/young people in our college or in our local area; and*
- *have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education (DfE) in accordance with section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and associated regulations.*

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the College will be taken seriously and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the social services department of the local authority (Social Services), the child protection unit of the Police or the NSPCC without investigation within the College. In each of these cases, the matter will be referred by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), (Barnet's LADO should be contacted via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Barnet MASH) on 020 8359 4066). Any doubts or concerns over apparently borderline cases will be discussed informally with the LADO, initially on a "no names" basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The College has appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority (Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)) to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. Parents are welcome to approach the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they have any concerns about the welfare of any child or young person in the College, whether these concerns relate to their own child or any other child or young person. If preferred, parents may discuss concerns in private with the child/young person's form teacher or the Principal who will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with these procedures.

The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are:

- to be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection;
- to co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the College;
- to maintain an ongoing training programme for all College employees;
- to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection;
- to liaise with the child protection officer appointed by Social Services (the LADO);
- to keep parents informed of action to be taken under these procedures in relation to their child or the young person;
- to monitor records of students in the College who are subject to a child protection plan to ensure that this is maintained and updated as notification is received;
- to liaise with other professionals to ensure that children or young people who are subject to child protection plans are monitored;
- where appropriate, to take part in child protection conferences or reviews;
- to inform Social Services in writing when a child or young person who is subject to a child protection plan moves to another school and to inform the new school of the child protection plan as advised by the Social Services.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the College site is **Barbara Fiordalisi**, who may be contacted on 020 8202 2007. She will:

- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to her;
- keep the principal informed of all actions unless the principal is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should contact the relevant agency and make a referral immediately;
- liaise with Social Services and other agencies on behalf of the College.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is unavailable her duties will be carried out by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who has received appropriate training. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **Alan Kunna and Yashpreet (Exams Officer)**, who may be contacted on 020 8202 2007.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) have undertaken Safeguarding and child protection: the essentials 2022/23 and DSL training.

The external team of MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is the external council team to be contacted in cases of emergency on 020 8359 2000.

Types of abuse

Abuse can be:

- physical abuse, for example beating or punching;
- emotional abuse, for example rejection, cyber-bullying and denial of affection;
- sexual abuse, for example sexual assault or encouraging a child to view pornographic material;
- neglect, for example failure to provide appropriate care including warmth or medical attention.
- Child-on-child abuse (peer-on-peer)
- Serious violence and exploitation (county lines, gangs)
- Radicalisation & extremism (Prevent Duty, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Online safety risks (including AI-generated exploitation risks highlighted in 2024).

Signs of abuse

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the student says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the student's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the student's behaviour;
- the student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;
- the student's development is delayed;
- the student loses or gains weight;
- the student appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the student is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his / her parents or carers.

Duty of employees, directors and volunteers

Every employee and director of the College as well as every volunteer who assists the College is under a general legal duty:

- to protect children and young people from abuse;
- to be aware of the College's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Every employee is under a legal duty to undertake appropriate training including refresher training.

Whistleblowing

All staff are required to report to the Principal any concern or allegations about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In exceptional cases such reports should be made to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285)

Senior students

Senior students who hold positions of responsibility over other students will be briefed on appropriate action to take should they receive any allegations of abuse.

Staff and student relationships

Sexual relationships between staff and students are strictly prohibited and may be a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Procedures

Initial complaint

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child/young person and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child/young person but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed

by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Preserving evidence:

All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

Reporting

All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or if the complaint involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to the Principal.

Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The action to be taken will take into account:

- the local inter-agency procedures of the Barnet Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to Social Services or the Police without further investigation within the College;
- the wishes of the student who has complained, provided that the student is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a student's wishes;
- the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the student's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child or young person at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
- the lawful rights and interests of the College community as a whole including its employees and its insurers;

if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may consult with the LADO or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours). If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will confirm the referral in writing to Social Services within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will contact Social Services again.

Referral guidelines

A referral to Social Services or the Police will not normally be made where:

- the complaint does not involve risk of harm; and
- a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a student complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and
- the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under the College's internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will again consider whether a referral should be made.

External agencies

Whether or not the College decides to refer a particular complaint to Social Services or the Police, the parents and student will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social Services Department or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate. Students for whom the College has organised accommodation and their parents have access to a complaints procedure in relation to issues affecting their welfare which provides contact details for MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

Allegations against staff

The College has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children and young people from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in chapter 5 of Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- *the safety and welfare of the students or student concerned; and*
- *the need for a full and fair investigation.*

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or any other member of staff or a volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Principal. Allegations against members of staff can be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the Principal's absence. Allegations against the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the Principal's absence.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Principal, the person receiving the allegation should immediately refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), without first notifying the Principal. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be required to contact and make a referral to the relevant agency or agencies without delay.

Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student. This guidance is contained in the college policies and procedures.

If the College ceases to use the services of a member of staff because they are unsuitable to work with children or young people, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the College, with a report being presented to the directors without delay.

If a member of staff (or a governor) tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the College. Resignation will not prevent a prompt and detailed report being made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority in appropriate circumstances.

Allegations against students

A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the College during the investigation and the College's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. The College will take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the College will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LADO, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of students whose parents are abroad, the student's Education Guardian will be requested to provide support to the student and to accommodate him/her if it is necessary to suspend him/her during the investigation.

Suspected harm from outside the College

A member of staff who suspects that a student is suffering harm from outside the College should seek information from the child or young person with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned, he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Informing parents

Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will need to consult the LADO and/or the Principal before discussing details with parents.

Secure College premises

The College will take all practicable steps to ensure that College premises are as secure as circumstances permit.

Visitors Book

The College keeps a Visitors Book at Reception. All visitors must sign in on arrival and sign out on departure and are escorted whilst on college premises by a member of staff. All visitors will be given a name badge with the title 'Visitor' which must be clearly displayed and worn at all times whilst on College premises.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The College will keep all child protection records confidential, allowing disclosure only to those who need the information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/young people. The College will co-operate with the Police and Social Services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in accordance with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Monitoring

- *Any child protection incidents at the College will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the College and a prompt report to the director (Principal).*
- *In addition, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and will make an annual report to the director (Principal).*
- *The director (Principal) will undertake an annual review of this policy and how their duties under it have been discharged.*
- *The director (Principal) will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements at any time are remedied without delay.*

Contact numbers

The telephone numbers of the Barnet Council Social Services Departments are as follows:

Barnet's LADO should be contacted via the Barnet MASH, Rob Wratten on 020 8359 5117; email–lado@barnet.gov.uk

The following telephone numbers may be useful for students:

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

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