WENTWORTH COLLEGE

Safeguarding, Welfare and Child Protection Policy

Approved by: Manuel Guimaraes, Principal

Last Review: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Safeguarding, Welfare and Child Protection Policy

Wentworth College is fully aware of the contribution it can make and the obligation it has to protect children and support students in College. The aim of this policy is to safeguard our students' welfare, safety and health by promoting a supportive, caring and open environment as well as educating our students of potential risks they may face virtually.

This policy has been developed in accordance with, and is directed by, the following legislation, statutory guidance and advice:

● Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004 – foundation for safeguarding duties and the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.
● Education Act 2002, Section 175 – duty on schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
● Children and Families Act 2014 – provisions for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
● Education Act 2011 – powers to address behaviour, discipline and searches linked to safeguarding.
● Working Together to Safeguard Children (Statutory Guidance, 2023 update) – inter-agency cooperation and early help duties.
● Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) – statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding and child protection.
● Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – safeguarding standards for independent schools and colleges.
● Equality Act 2010 – protecting children from discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
● Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty) – duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism or extremism.
● Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR – safeguarding and child protection record-keeping and information sharing requirements.

This policy aims to be an adolescent and young person-centred policy where their needs and views are foremost in the decision-making and in the policy itself. Young people and adolescents want to be respected, their views heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and to have consistent support provided for their individual needs (Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2023).
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is defined as:
● protecting children from maltreatment;
● preventing impairment of children's health or development; including mental health and well being
● ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;

● taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes (Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2025). Where a child or adolescent is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or at immediate risk. “Children” includes everyone under the age of 18 (KCSIE 2025).
● Assuming there is risk or neglect even when none has been actively reported.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Wentworth College committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.
The welfare of all students in College is of paramount importance.
As well as safeguarding against neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse, staff should have an understanding of wider safeguarding issues including:
● Child sexual exploitation
● Child Criminal Exploitation
● Mental health and well being
● Domestic violence
● Child-on-child abuse (previously peer violence)
● County Lines
● So called honor-based abuse including FMG (female genital mutilation) and forced marriage ● Fabricated & induced illness
● Substance misuse and gang activity.
● Radicalisation
● Serious violence
● Attendance as a safeguarding risk
● Evolving digital risks - enhanced online safety risks
● AI monitoring and integrity
● Kinship Care Responsibilities

KEY PRINCIPLES

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. We will act in the best interest of the child.
It is our policy and our commitment to take all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each student in our care and:
1.Ensure that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with students with the guidance given in keeping children safe in

Education (2025), the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

2. To protect each student from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another student(child on child abuse).

3. To be alert and able to identify indicators of all possible abuses both in the College and from outside. 4. To deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse with robust reporting systems 5. To make sure records are available to all when appropriate, they are proportionate and relevant and are recorded in a neutral and professional manner

6. To design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which, so far as possible, ensure that staff and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.

7. To be alert to the needs of students with medical conditions.

8. To operate sensible health and safety procedures.

9. To take all practicable steps to ensure that the college premises are as secure as circumstances permit.

10. To operate a clear and supportive policy on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse.

11. To consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual students in the College

12. To have regard to current education legislation and guidance provided by the Secretary of State for Education.

13. To establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to and promotes an environment that promotes positive mental health and prevents difficulties 14. To ensure students know that there are adults in the College whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

15. To uphold and develop each student's self-esteem, security, confidence, assertiveness, independence and personal safety skills.

16. To help students to acquire skills and attitudes to stand against abuse in their own lives and to prepare them for responsibilities in their adult lives.

17. To encourage all students towards a positive self-image.

18.To help students to make reasoned, informed choices, judgements and decisions.

19. To establish effective communication between students, teachers, parents and support agencies. 20. To provide guidelines for all College staff in cases of suspected or disclosed abuse and or neglect. 21. To educate and inform students around online safety risks, as well as facilitating them in discerning fake news and conspiracy theories.

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the College will be investigated. If the 'Designated Lead Person' is unsure about whether a case should be formally referred or has a general concern about a student's health or development, he /she can seek advice and support from the local social services department, the MASH team (Barnet) on 020 8359 4066 or the NSPCC The Education Welfare Officer may also be able to offer advice.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection

The College has appointed a member of staff

CANDICE RAKUSIN (the DSL)

to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. The main responsibilities of this individual are:

•To undergo training every two years (last completed September 2025)

•To be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and administrative staff, external agencies and any other in all matters of child protection.

•To ensure all staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a student who may tell of abuse.

•To co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the College.

•To ensure that the College provides on-going staff training in child protection and that training is up to date with policy (last completed September 2025).

•To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection. •To ensure that all students are encouraged to talk and that students know whom to approach with any concerns.

•To ensure that the duty of care towards students and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is unavailable or is the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Principal

MANUEL GUIMARAES (Principal)

EVERY STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT:-

•To be free from any abuse

•To have staff in College with whom they can feel confident to discuss any concerns regarding child protection.

•To have their self-esteem and self-confidence nurtured at all times.

•To be educated in personal safety skills, the responsibilities of parenthood and how to become a responsible citizen, free from discrimination on the grounds of gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, creed or background.

Types of Abuse

The following categories of significant harm, defined in relevant publications, are used for the Register and statistical purposes.

Neglect

A persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate

food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or guardian feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fabricated and induced illness. This also includes FGM.

Emotional Abuse

A persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature signs of developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child. This also includes FGM.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a young child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching
sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. All staff should be aware of the possibility of sexual violence and sexual harassment for all students including those that are LGBTQ+. There is a safe space in the college for children to address concerns with staff about these issues.
Domestic Abuse (this kind of abuse is violent, co-ercive, controlling, threatening and it can happen to anyone including teenagers in relationships and includes witnessing. It includes physical, psychological, sexual, financial and technological.
All staff should be able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse including students being:

- aggressive or having tantrums
- anti-social behaviour
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- nervousness

• taking part in more activities outside of home
• being regularly ill
• misuse of drugs and alcohol
• eating disorders
• absenteeism
• becoming withdrawn
• acting younger than they are

Please record all of your concerns and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

OTHER SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

All staff are made aware of and alert to, other specific safeguarding issues, and given advice on these, by the DSL in the annual refresher on Child Protection matters. Staff have completed The Key Safeguarding Training (2025). Staff are aware that a Child Missing from Education or with prolonged absenteeism is potentially a safeguarding concern and could be a sign of abuse or neglect. Staff are alert to patterns of regular absence and will alert the DSL in line with other potential safeguarding concerns. The School has a duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The school's attendance monitoring system regularly highlights pupils whose attendance falls below 95% to ensure that attendance is closely monitored and regular absence is followed up in the best interests of the child. Please refer to Bromcom Register.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) ("a type of sexual abuse in which all young children under the age of 18 (or over) are sexually exploited for money, power or status", NSPCC). Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly "consensual" relationship where sex is exchanged for gifts or money, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out all forms of Child Sexual Exploitation is the imbalance of power in the relationship, from coercion or intimidation (including threats) to have sex, to unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. It can be one experience or many different ones. It can be difficult to recognise, can look different for different genders, the victim may have a genuine trust of the abuser and may not recognise or realise that the situation is abusive. The contact for CSE at Barnet is Perryn Jasper - 020 8359 7207 perryn.jasper@barnet.gov.uk Female Genital Mutilation ("all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs", KCSIE 2021). FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting consequences. Any concerns that FGM has taken place, or may be about to take place, must be reported immediately to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures. This may involve a disclosure from a pupil, a friend or relative. Staff should not examine pupils. Since October 2015 teachers have a mandatory duty to report to the police any disclosure or other evidence of FGM on a girl under 18 to the police. Unless the member of staff has a good reason not to, they should discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate. Under this new mandatory duty a teacher failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. Perryn Jasper may be contacted if staff are in doubt about a possible case of FGM in the college.

Preventing the Radicalisation (the PREVENT duty)

The school takes its duty to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation very seriously. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism as defined under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Under paragraph 7 of Prevent, extremism is defined as a “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces”. The school aims to protect and safeguard pupils at risk of radicalisation and staff are alert to, and assess the risk of, pupils being drawn into terrorism and extremist ideology. We encourage healthy debate and discussion of issues at age appropriate levels and in various areas, and we promote a tolerant, respectful culture throughout school. Staff use their professional judgment to identify pupils who might be at risk of radicalisation and how may be in need of help or protection.

If a member of staff has concerns over a pupil at risk they will share that with the DSL who will consider whether it is appropriate to refer the issue to the Safeguarding Welfare and Child Protection Policy 8 local Children’s Social Care/LSCB and the local Prevent Co-ordinator and/or Channel Panel, a programme focussing on early support for a child or young person identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation. Prevent training for staff is updated every two years. Training will be completed on October 8th 2025. Perryn Jasper is available to staff for advice and guidance if they are unsure about possible radicalisation in the college.

Safer Recruitment

In recruiting staff to vacant posts, the College will:
• Ensure that there is a clear statement confirming the College’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students in all recruitment materials, induction training and in job descriptions.
• There will be one suitably trained person on each selection panel for every appointment made within the College (Mr. Jon Alsop) who will advise on child protection matters pertaining to interviewees. Before any appointment there will always be a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate’s suitability to work with children as part of ascertaining his/her suitability for the post. All interviewees will be questioned on their awareness of child protection issues.
● All applicants will list employment history with exact dates and explain all gaps.
● In job descriptions, make reference to the responsibility of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; all personal specifications will include reference to suitability to work with children.
● Approach referees for all short-list candidates, including internal applicants, and ensure referees are sent the job description and person specification. A written reference will always be taken from the most recent

employer. If the applicant is not working with children but has done so in the past an additional reference will be obtained from the employer by whom the applicant was most recently employed to work with children. Referees will be provided with a standard reference pro-forma that asks for general comments on the candidate's performance history and conduct.

● Not accept open references from candidates. References will be obtained directly from referees.

● Disclosure and Barring Service check. Due to the nature of the work, the School applies for an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of all prospective staff members. An enhanced disclosure will contain details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer. An enhanced disclosure will also reveal whether an applicant is barred from working with children or young adults by virtue of his/her inclusion on Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy 5 the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children or young adults maintained by the DBS. An enhanced disclosure may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question. If there is a delay in receiving a DBS disclosure the School has discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the disclosure. This will only be allowed if all other checks, including a check of the Children's Barred List have been completed and once appropriate supervision has been put in place.

● Ensure that proof of identity is obtained from all employees (both full time, part time and contracted) without exception and a copy will be kept on file. Exam and degree certificates and/or certificates of professional qualifications will be requested from all staff for whom this is appropriate and copies will be kept on file.

● Keep all medical records on file.

Jon Alsop has completed training for Safer Recruitment (September 2025)

For further information, please refer to the Recruitment of Staff Policy which can be found on our website.

Online Safety

Measures are in place for appropriate online filters and monitoring systems to help ensure the online safety of pupils. The school aims to work in close partnership with parents to ensure that Children enjoy the freedom ICT brings whilst also understanding and knowing how to keep themselves safe in regard to mobile phones, smart watches, sending nudes and semi-nudes. Pupils are taught a range of topics which include keeping safe online, women's safety in society, and also talks about the world in which they live. There is also an adolescent therapist available to students if they would like to report or discuss unsafe online concerns. Online safety also extends to risks around and healthy use of AI and education, informing and facilitating students to discern the dissemination of fake news.

Child-on -child abuse

Staff should be alert and aware that children can abuse other children, sometimes unwittingly and sometimes intentionally. All staff are encouraged to report any concerns. Further information on types of abuse and links to up-to-date information and guidance on safeguarding issues can be found in KCSIE (5 September 2025). Keep in mind that no repeated cases does not mean it is not occurring.
Possible signs or indicators of abuse include (but are not limited to)

- Disclosure of abuse or a question which gives rise to that inference
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there are a number of injuries or a pattern to them
- The pupil's behaviour changes suddenly or their behaviour stands out as being extremely challenging behaviour or possibly extreme model behaviour
- The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons
- The pupil's development is delayed
- The pupil loses or gains weight
- Self-harming behaviour, including cutting and drug and alcohol abuse
- The pupil uses inappropriate sexual language
- The pupil displays a high level of anxiety
- The pupil isolates himself/herself and becomes withdrawn
- The pupil appears neglected, for example, hungry or inadequately clothed
- The pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by parents or carers
- The pupil's friendship circle in or out of school changes significantly and/or suddenly

Fabricated or Induced Illness

Teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed and trained to notice outward signs of harm through their day-to-day contact with students. It is important that staff do not undertake their own enquiries if they have reason to suspect possible or actual harm. Enquiries into concerns about a student's welfare (if under 18) are the responsibility of the MASH hub based in Barnet or the police. They have the necessary professional expertise to take such enquiries forward. As with all other forms of suspected harm or young people over 18, teachers and all other staff should refer any child welfare concerns they have to the senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection issues (The Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist). She will act as a source of advice and support, and is responsible for co-ordinating action within the College and liaising with the Barnet MASH hub or other appropriate support networks.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage, but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement still remains with the prospective spouses. However, in forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor. It can happen to both women and men, although many of the reported cases involve young women and girls aged between 16 and 25. There is no "typical" victim of forced marriage.

Potential signs or indicators (These are not intended to be an exhaustive list.)

- Absence and persistent absence.
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to the country of origin.
- Fear about forthcoming school holidays
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school.
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.
- Poor exam results.
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility.
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education
- Social care assessment

Gangs and Youth Violence

The College recognises that 'early intervention' includes anti-bullying and a curriculum that ensures that young people develop the social and emotional skills they need in order to meet their full potential. The college will provide workshops and tutor time to ensure students develop conflict resolution skills, understanding risky situations, and violence and abuse should be clearly defined so that young people know when to seek help.

Drugs and substance abuse

As part of the College's statutory duty to promote pupils' wellbeing, the college will endeavour to:

● Provide accurate information on drugs and alcohol through education and targeted information, including via the FRANK service;
● Tackle problem behaviour in schools, with wider powers of search and confiscation
- Work with local voluntary organisations, health partners, the police and others to prevent drug or alcohol misuse

Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities (SEND) and Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

The College recognises that students with SEN or SEND or previously looked after children requirements may have additional safeguarding challenges. There can be additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of students. They can also be vulnerable to bullying without showing obvious signs. This is not an exhaustive list of vulnerable students:

● assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the student's impairment without further exploration
● students with SEN and SEND can be impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs ● communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Whistleblowing

All staff are required to report to the Principal, therapist or Safeguarding Lead, any concern or allegations about the school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making a report provided that it is done in good faith.

DUTY OF THE COLLEGE

● The College has the responsibility to:
● Read all policies including update to KCSIE (2025)
● Read and understand policies through CPD and training.
● Provide an environment free from any abuse or discrimination
● Provide a designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues.
● Be aware of absenteeism as a safeguarding issue
● Respect each student's right to privacy regarding abuse but within the requirements of this policy. ● Train all staff to be aware of the possibility of abuse and the potential signs to look for.˙ All staff to undertake safeguarding training.

● At all times raise each student's self-esteem and confidence.
● Educate students to respect everyone, recognise British values to develop personal safety skills and to become well rounded members of society.
● Liaise with Social Services if abuse requiring a referral is suspected.
● Inform parents and guardians of the College's Child Protection Policy
● Implement and monitor an Anti-Bullying Policy.

Duty of Staff

Every member of staff in the College has a duty:
● To protect students 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 DSL or Principal.
● To undertake appropriate training, with the DSL undertaking refresher training every two years.

PROCEDURES

11. Initial Complaint
A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse must not investigate it beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation. In particular, the member of staff:
o Must listen carefully to the student and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place. Reassure the student that their complaint will be heard and listened to carefully, and that they will feel supported.
o MUST NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
o Must reassure the student but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality and explain the need to pass the information to the Designated Person, who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
o Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation, that a complaint has been made, 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 Person.

Preserving Evidence

All evidence (e.g, 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 Person or to the Principal. The Designated Person will brief the Principal on all cases, unless the Principal is himself the subject of the complaint, in which case another senior member of staff should be briefed.

Action by the Designated Person

The action to be taken will take into account:
o 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 by the college.
o 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 need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a student's wishes.
o 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 Person involved is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a student at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals (LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer) before making a decision to disclose.
o Duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.
o The lawful rights and interests of the College community as a whole including its employees and insurers.
o If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person dealing with the case may consult with Social Services or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a student may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person responsible will confirm the referral in writing to
Social Services within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgement is received within three working days, the Designated Person 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 a serious criminal offence.
● A referral would be contrary to the wishes of a student complainant who has the sufficient maturity, understanding and is properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents.
● 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.

If, however, during the course of the internal procedures it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Person will again consider whether a referral should be made in accordance with this policy When making a referral of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, the Designated Person will ask to be informed of the timing of this strategy discussion between the statutory agencies which will decide whether and how to investigate. The Designated Person will clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the student will be told that a referral has been made. A member of staff, either the Designated Person or the member of staff who knows the student best, will be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion on the College's knowledge of the student.

External Agencies

Whether or not the College decides to refer a particular complaint to Social Services or the police, the complainant (in the case of a student this means the student and his/her parents or guardians) will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to social services or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

In dealing with allegations against staff, including the Principal and all others with regular contact with students, the College aims to strike a balance between the need to protect students from abuse and the need to protect staff from false or unfounded allegations. A College employee who is the subject of an allegation of abuse may be asked to take leave of absence or may be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. This is decided by the Principal. The Principal will need to take into account the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to the student concerned or to other students, and the possibility that evidence has been tampered with, as well as the interests of the person concerned and the College. Suspension would be a neutral act, not a disciplinary sanction and would be on full salary. If the complaint is against the Principal, a senior member of staff

JODY NEWMAN, PROPRIETOR will take over the Principal's responsibilities and duties. 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:
o The safety and welfare of the students or student concerned; and
o The need for a full and fair investigation.

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 Behaviour and Discipline Policy will apply.

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 student 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 College’s Designated Person or the Principal.

MONITORING

The Designated Person will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures.

COMPLAINTS

If a parent or guardian (or a pupil aged 16+) considers that the College has not operated this policy correctly, he or she may submit a complaint under the College’s formal Complaints Procedure.

Guidelines for all Members of Staff

- All staff (teaching and administrative) have a responsibility to protect each student from abuse; this means that if you have a concern about a student, you should talk to the Designated Person or the Principal.
- Any lesson or activity may raise the sensitive issue of child abuse; be alert to the impact of the issues raised.
- Respect a student’s right to privacy so that only the people who need to know are party to details of any possible abuse to that student.
- It is important for all students to acquire and develop skills for personal safety. This will primarily be delivered via the PHSE Programme but all teaching staff in any lesson or activity can contribute to students’ understanding.
- Because of their day to day contact with individual students, teachers and other staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities. Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition, and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking, may be noticeable. Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity or withdrawal. These signs and others can do no more than give rise to suspicion – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. Teachers should, however, be alert to all the signs. The appointment of designated members of staff should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff

in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed, including those in cases where an accusation is made against a member of the College's staff.

- All teaching staff should seek to develop relationships that will encourage each student to talk about potential abuse, but in particular each student's Head of Year must seek to develop relationships whereby any abuse would be likely to be disclosed. Any prolonged breakdown in relationship should be discussed with the Principal.

WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED THE FIRST QUESTION TO ASK IS ALWAYS – "IS THE STUDENT SAFE?"

THE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT OVER-RIDES CONFIDENTIALITY

(N.B. Do NOT offer student confidentiality)

Always immediately see the DSL or the Principal to discuss concerns or suspicions. Together decide whether, based on available evidence and in accordance with the policy on child protection, what further action should be taken. Concerns can always be discussed with the Social Services Department Duty Team without a formal referral being made.

Concerns must be formally logged. Remember that staff often know the student (and sometimes the parents and home) exceptionally well and teachers' training and experience mean they are well placed to make observations and professional judgments regarding a student's welfare. The records should differentiate between a "one-off incident" that requires immediate action and initially lower level concerns that build up to form a picture of concerns. The latter can take place over time, in different College settings and should be shared between staff.

Make a written note of the details as soon as possible. This is likely to ensure accuracy in recalling events later if this should be necessary. Evidence should be based on sound professional judgment and evidence which can be documented.

These notes must be passed to the DSL and no one else should be in possession of either a written or electronic copy, except for the author who may keep a secure copy until the matter is closed.

GUIDANCE FOR TALKING WITH A STUDENT WHEN A CHILD PROTECTION ISSUE IS A POSSIBILITY:

DO:

- Believe the student
- Remember that often a student will make some attempt to "tell" in the early stages of abuse. If they are not heard they may never try again.
- Be accessible and receptive.
- Listen carefully and ask open questions to clarify (e.g. who, what, when, where, how)
- Take it seriously (e.g. "This is very serious, I'm sad that has happened to you"). Abused children are often threatened by the perpetrator that they will not be believed. Listen without value judgments and show the child that you take their

problem seriously. Tell the child that you believe him/her. Choose a place to talk where you will not be interrupted.

- Reassure the student they are right to tell (e.g. “I’m glad you told me - that was the right thing to do”).
- Reassure the student it was not their fault. The threats that children live under to keep the secret are very powerful and they will be frightened of the consequences of telling. Reassure the child they have done the right thing. Tell them they are not to blame. Offer ongoing support.
- Do not tell the child how they should feel. Validate their feelings and just listen. Avoid asking questions but feedback what they say if you need to respond verbally.
- Negotiate getting help. Tell the student you are going to get help for them and their family. Prepare them for the fact that you MUST AND WILL BE INVOLVING OTHERS.
- Explain that you cannot personally protect them – but will support them in telling the right people to make sure it does not happen again.
- Report all suspicions or disclosures immediately.
- Immediately make careful handwritten and dated records of what was said – using the student’s own words and including questions you asked.

DO NOT:

- Jump to conclusions
- Ask any leading questions (e.g. was it your parent?)
- Try to get the student to disclose – let the student talk and ask only the questions you need to know to clarify immediate safety. The student should not be repeatedly interviewed. The police/social services interview will form the basis of evidence needed to protect the student. Once a disclosure has occurred then reassure the student but terminate the discussion as soon as possible as it is easy to corrupt evidence that the police will later want to use.
- Speculate or accuse anybody.
- Make promises you cannot keep.

GUIDANCE FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY (BARNET)

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of abuse against children are raised. The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board has arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these arrangements as well as the Department for Children, Schools & Families, which Barnet’s Safeguarding Division has a responsibility to routinely report to. The procedure for managing allegations against staff should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a teacher or member of staff (including the Principal) in a school that provides education for children under 18 years of age has:

o Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;

o Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or;

o Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse, namely; physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

This college has devised procedures and will ensure existing procedures are up to date for dealing with allegations, and that all staff understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff, or if they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff. These procedures should include detailing who the allegation should be reported to and noting an alternative member of staff in their absence.

In all cases there will be no delay in reporting and any incident will be reported within 24 hours. Whilst many minor incidents do not come into the above categories and are dealt with on a day to day basis and perfectly well by schools, where incidents clearly come within the above procedures or there is any doubt or uncertainty, the DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the first instance. The LADO will then take the referral and advise of the next steps, or discuss the allegation or concern to determine if the threshold is met for these procedures. The College's role is limited to collecting evidence and no further action will be taken, by the College, until advice has been received, from the LADO, on how to proceed.

To ensure that both pupils and the member of staff whom the allegation has been made against are safeguarded, we will discuss the allegation with the LADO prior to taking any further action such as taking statements. To do so may hamper a police investigation or render the member of staff vulnerable should the matter proceed to court, due to the member of staff not having had appropriate representation and advice.

However, a disclosure made by a pupil should always be recorded by the member of staff that the pupil discloses to in the pupil's own words, but the member of staff should refrain from asking the pupil questions.

Should a strategy meeting be convened and conclude that a single agency social care investigation be undertaken, the Safeguarding Division has a dedicated Investigations Officer who will investigate the allegation sensitively.

The College will inform Ofsted, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 (fourteen) days, of any actual abuse or allegations of abuse on the premise.

The College will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (TEL: 0300 123 1111), within ONE calendar month of their leaving, any person whose services are no longer used because they are considered unsuitable to work with students.

The Principal undertakes to review this policy and applications of the policy, fully, each year.

The Principal states that any deficiencies or weaknesses that come to light, in child protection arrangements, will be dealt with immediately.

A COPY OF THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE TO ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS, UPON REQUEST, FROM THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE.