

# Safeguarding Policy

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## Introduction

Whilst the student group of Birmingham Christian College (BCC) consists of people over the age of 18 it is possible that we may accept adults onto courses who would be considered 'vulnerable' and therefore a safeguarding policy is necessary to deal with potential cases of emotional, sexual or physical abuse or neglect<sup>1</sup>. BCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its students and everyone working for BCC shares an objective to help keep our students safe by contributing to providing a safe environment in which students can learn and develop and by not abusing their position of trust.

This policy has been written to raise awareness of staff, ensure effective communication between staff when dealing with a safeguarding issue and to lay down procedures to follow for those who encounter a safeguarding issue.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, working on behalf of BCC. It refers to vulnerable adults regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

## Designated Safeguarding Officer for the Organisation

The designated Safeguarding Officer for BCC is the Principal or, in his absence, the Registrar.

The designated officer will have responsibility for coordinating action within BCC and for liaising with all other relevant agencies over safeguarding issues.

## Staff Recruitment

BCC recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews. New staff will be required to provide proof of identity before taking up their post.

## Safe Practice

Safe working practice ensures that students are safe and that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;

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<sup>1</sup> Abuse is the violation of an individual's human rights. It can be a single act or repeated acts. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional. It also includes acts of neglect or an omission to act. In all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse. Vulnerable adults may also suffer additional types of abuse such as being manipulated financially or being discriminated against. Other examples of abuse include inflicting physical harm such as hitting or misuse of medication, rape and sexual assault or exposure to sexual acts without informed consent, emotional abuse such as threats, humiliation and harassment, exploitation, ignoring medical or physical needs, withholding of necessities of life such as food or heating. This list is not definitive.

- work in an open and transparent way;
- work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question
- discuss and/or take advice from their line manager over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- record any incidents or decisions made;
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- be aware of confidentiality policy
- should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary or criminal action being taken against them.

## Safeguarding Information for Students

All students will be made aware that we have a senior member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding issues and know who this is. They will be advised of staff to whom they might talk and their right to be listened to and heard.

Students may talk to their lecturer or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a student may be at risk of harm or radicalisation.
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the person
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- reassure and support the person as far as possible
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate.

## Confidentiality

Where there is a concern that a student may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the student's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.

If this is the case then

- a) information must be shared with police and relevant agencies
- b) information should be shared on a need to know basis only.

## Referrals

Where a member of staff has reason to suspect there is a safeguarding issue, or risk of radicalisation they should report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the student
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. other staff or trustees, the Local Authority Designated Officer, DFE
- the student's wishes

then decide whether to make a referral to the police and/or social care because a student is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm or there is a concern for radicalisation and if this needs to be undertaken immediately. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

## Action following a referral

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or other appropriate member of staff will:

- where required, contribute to any Strategy Discussion
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent meetings
- monitor progress of any investigation

## Recording and monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All records relating to safeguarding issues will be stored in a locked cabinet and only accessible to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the Registrar.

## Dealing with an Allegation against a Member of Staff

Where an allegation is made against any person working for or on behalf of BCC that he or she has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student or may have harmed a student
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student or
- Has behaved towards a student in a way that indicates abuse of a position of trust

We will apply the same principles as in the rest of this document. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely. Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

#### Initial Action:

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer and make a record
- In the event that an allegation is made against the Designated Safeguarding Officer the matter will be reported to the Registrar who will proceed as the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of students and any urgent medical needs
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of students
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by BCC or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation
- Consideration will be given throughout to the pastoral support of all involved
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform the Chair of Trustees of any allegation.

Should an employee have a concern about another member of staff they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer explaining the reasons for their worries. Their report will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and the steps outlined above will be followed.

BCC will take appropriate action to protect a whistle-blower who makes a serious allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the best interests of the alleged victim and/or college to do so from any reprisals, harassment or victimisation. No disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistle-blower who makes an allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the best interests of the alleged victim and/or college to do so even if the allegation is not substantiated by an investigation. However, disciplinary action may be taken against a whistle-blower who makes an allegation without reasonable belief that it is in the best interests of the alleged victim and/or college to do so (e.g. making an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain).