

POLICY NAME: Policy on Safeguarding Young People

The College is committed to the equality of opportunity and to a proactive approach to equality, which supports and encourages under-represented groups, promotes inclusivity and values diversity.

Responsible Senior Leader	Associate Principal (Students and Welfare)
Policy Owner	Associate Principal (Students and Welfare)
Approved by	Corporation
Approval date	September 2026
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Policy location	Intranet, Website

Equality Impact Assessment by	Corporation, ELT							
Intended Audience	Staff	X	Governors	X	Students	X	External	X
Added to College website by	Marketing & Equalities Officer				Date	25.09.26		
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Amendment summary

<u>Version no.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Paragraphs amended</u>
1	2023.11.13		

Due for review by Corporation September 2027

Policy on Safeguarding Young People

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Corporation. It is intended that the policy is a 'live' document and should be updated when necessary, 'at least' once a year.
- The College produces regular briefings for staff on safeguarding matters in line with training requirements as directed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- The WQE and Regent College Group Corporation will receive safeguarding update training by the end of October 2026 and regular safeguarding updates during the academic year thereafter (through site visits, E-Learning and Corporation meeting updates etc depending on most appropriate delivery method).
- The College has a Designated Safeguarding Governor.
- All staff will receive the following documentation annually, they will read and acknowledge they have understood each document:
 - All Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) [Part One]; who work directly with children read at least Part One of this guidance.
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding Young People Policy
 - Student Behaviour Policy
 - Bereavement Policy
 - Prevent Strategy and Risk Assessment
 - Sexual Abuse Action Plan — Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
 - Staff and Student Privacy Policy
 - Acceptable use Policy

External representation:

- The DSL represents the College at the East Midlands Prevent Network
- The College is represented at the City Safeguarding Leads Forum.
- The College is represented on the City and County FE Safeguarding Forum.
- The College is represented at the City Looked After Children (LAC) DSL Forum.
- The College represents the FE sector at the Prevent Steering Group (PSG).

This document utilises the terms children, young people and students when referring to people aged 16 plus in our care.

Sarah Thomson (Chair of Governors), Signature

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

The College fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding. It is committed to establishing a safe environment in which students can learn and develop. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote student welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The students' welfare is of paramount importance.

The College adopts an open and accepting attitude towards its students as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. The College encourages students and parents/carers to feel free to talk about any concerns and to see this as a safe place when there are difficulties. All concerns will be taken seriously, and students are encouraged to seek help when needed. In attempting to ensure this the College will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that students know that there are staff in the College whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in its offer activities and opportunities which equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation (including online), and to know to whom they can turn for help
- Teach students to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. During Personal Progress Mentor (PPM) sessions, students receive up to date Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) in line with DfE Statutory Guidance (pending new guidance September 2026). The Welfare and Skills Team provide daily support, both planned and unplanned proactive support, where a staff member or student is referred as at welfare risk. The Safeguarding Team have a duty rota to always ensure availability, offering advice and guidance to students and staff. All staff are trained to signpost students to the PPM, Welfare and Skills or Safeguarding Team as appropriate
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies operate Safer Recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers* who will work with young people, including identity, right to work, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record and barred list (and overseas where needed), references, and prohibition from teaching. (*Volunteers teaching, training, instructing or supervising more than 3 days in 30 days are classed as regulated activity).
- Recognise the wider importance of considering wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is known as Contextual Safeguarding and is referred to in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026; and in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The College assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the wellbeing and safety of its students. Extra-familial harm is more likely to occur during adolescence and College safeguarding staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of such challenges
- Ensure all staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. College staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern

- Ensure staff have training stipulating that mental health concern(s) about a child may also be a safeguarding concern. They should raise the issue by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Utilise the College Designated Mental Health Lead and staff who have received senior mental health lead training to support students who experience mental health challenges, in line with Mental Health and Behaviour in Colleges November 2018
- Recognise that when a student has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most students. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health. We take these needs into account when making plans to support students who have a social worker.
- Ensure that all staff have regular data protection training in line with DfE data Protection guidance for schools.
- Monitor attendance in line with Statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance 2026 (although the College is not directly in scope of this guidance)

This policy applies to all staff, Governors and visitors to the College. We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff. We will ensure that all parents/carers and other working partners are aware of our safeguarding commitment by mentioning it in our prospectus, displaying appropriate information in college and on the College website.

This policy sets out how the College Corporation discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students at the College.

This policy formally applies to young people under the age of 18 years. However, the College recognises that it has a continued duty of care for students above this age and will apply it to all students at the College. All references in this Policy to students, children and young people refer also to vulnerable adults and adults enrolled in our college.

WQE College will fulfil local and national responsibilities and accepted best practice as laid out in the following documents.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping children safe in education 2026](#) and [Working together to safeguard children 2026](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our three local safeguarding partners (the Local Authority; Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Chief Officer of Police).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Female Genital mutilation Act 2003/Updated guidance July 2020
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains colleges' duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The College Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 & Amended Regulations 2015; Safer Recruitment in Education including
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice Rev 2019 - (Safer Recruitment consortium)
- Leicester Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (LSCPB)
- Voyeurism (Offences Act) 2019
- [Crime and Policing Act 2026 - GOV.UK](#); which places a statutory duty on all staff to report child sexual abuse to the police and children's social care

Definitions of terminology within this policy:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online (including misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories)
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- 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.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

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

Child-on-child Abuse The College recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur both online and offline and may include bullying (including cyberbullying), prejudice-based bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, misogyny, violence against women and girls, teenage relationship abuse, initiation/hazing behaviours, physical abuse, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images (including AI-generated content), upskirting, and abuse within intimate relationships. Prejudice-based harm, racism, faith-based prejudice, misogyny, misandry and discriminatory abuse may impact welfare and are considered within safeguarding practice.

The College adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images. Images include all visual content including photographs, videos or live streams. Under KCSIE 2026 this definition also includes AI-generated images, deepfakes and deep nudes. The images may be taken by the child themselves or taken or created by someone else.

Children include everyone under the age of 18, and these principles will be applied, as appropriate, to all students on college roll, even if above age 18.

Exploitation is when someone, or a group of people tricks or misleads somebody into doing things for them that are not right; either criminally or sexually. KCSIE 2026 recognises that children involved in exploitation may be the victims of Child Criminal Exploitation themselves.

The following three **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education. They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The Local Authority (LA)
- Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- The Chief Officer of Police

2 DESIGNATED STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026. The DSL has the appropriate status, authority, skills and experience to carry out the role effectively.

The DSL is a member of the College Executive Leadership Team with a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for young people learning within the College.

The DSL has received training in child/vulnerable adult protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by KCSIE and will continue to undertake refresher training at least every two years. The DSL will provide an annual report to the Corporation setting out how the College has discharged its duties. The DSL is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy identified by Safeguarding Partners to the Corporation at the earliest opportunity.

In addition to the above, the DSL is responsible for overseeing the operation of procedures at the College. This involves:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse/radicalisation, neglect and exploitation or allegations to the City/County Council's Department of Children and

Young People's Services, Specialist Services First Response Children's Duty or other agencies (such as Channel) as appropriate. Referral to the Police where a crime may have been committed.

- Overseeing the Operation Encompass programme (information on witness to domestic abuse, neglect or exploitation and wider safeguarding concerns).
- Provision of information to the Safeguarding Partners and Local Authorities on safeguarding in compliance with section 14B of the Children Act 2004.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to safeguarding.
- Maintaining a secure, proper record of any referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to an external referral). This will include monitoring and acting upon individual concerns, patterns of concerns or complaints.
- Ensuring that parents/carers of young people within the College are aware of the College's Safeguarding Policy.
- Liaising with the Children and Young People's Services Department of the Local Authorities, the Safeguarding Partners and other relevant agencies.
- Liaising with partner colleges, colleges and through the Local Authorities, to ensure that appropriate transition arrangements are in place.
- Liaising with the Corporation and the Local Authorities on any deficiencies brought to the attention of the Corporation and how these should be rectified.
- Being aware of students who have a social worker.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and College leadership staff.
- 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.' 'This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent...'
- Ensuring that all staff receive safeguarding training and are aware of College Policy and Procedures. That induction training covers safeguarding and Staff Code of Conduct and that from this staff can recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise.
- Obtain access to resources and effective training for all staff
- Attend refresher training courses every two years.
- To attend and contribute to Child Protection conferences, Child in Need, Core Group and other meetings when required (or ensure an appropriate representative from the Safeguarding Team can attend or contribute).
- Convening and chairing regular meetings of the College Safeguarding Team.
- When students leave the College, ensure their safeguarding information is passed on to any receiving institution as soon as possible, receiving a signature for receipt. This will be done with the agreement of the student where appropriate.
- Being the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Prevent related concerns.
- When services or activities are provided by WQE College under the direct supervision or management of college staff our arrangements for child protection will apply. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the DSL and appropriate Tier 3 leader (Curriculum Area Leader for Health and Sport for sporting activities) will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including

inspecting these as needed) and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the College on these matters where appropriate.

- The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems will be formally reviewed at least annually by the DSL, nominated senior leader, and IT services, with findings reported to the Safeguarding Governor.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the holistic assessment of students including welfare, safeguarding and academic progress
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority Children's Social Care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or Police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.

The DSL will also keep the Principal informed of any issues and liaise with Local Authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate. The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

Designated staff members – The Safeguarding Team

The College maintains robust safeguarding cover arrangements to ensure concerns are received, monitored and acted upon whenever the DSL is unavailable. A further group of staff trained as Deputy Safeguarding Leads ensure effective cover. Each member of the Safeguarding Team:

- Reports to and liaises with the DSL on safeguarding issues.
- Is trained and able to receive and make appropriate referrals to external agencies*.
- Is available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to safeguarding.
- Has responsibility to be available to listen to students at the College.
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Has received training in child protection/vulnerable adult issues and inter-agency working, as required by KCSIE 2026, and will receive refresher training at least every two years.
- Has had regular training regarding the online monitoring and filtering operational for the College.

*The College internal procedures ensure that decisions on referrals to external agencies are made in collaboration with senior members of the team.

Corporation

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

- The College has a safeguarding policy, procedures and training in place which are effective and comply with the law at all times. The policy is made available publicly.

- The Corporation is aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- The College operates Safer Recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers. Ensuring that staff involved in the recruitment process have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
- The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Principal, where appropriate (the Corporation is responsible for appointing an appropriate case manager).
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to the attention of the Corporation will be rectified without delay.
- The Chair of Governors (or, in the absence of a Chair, the Vice-Chair) deals with any allegations of abuse made against the Principal, in liaison with the Local Authority Allegations Manager (LADO).
- Effective policies and procedures are in place and updated annually, including the Code of Conduct for staff.
- There is an individual named member of the Corporation who is designated as the Safeguarding Governor. This person will liaise with the DSL and will contribute to the provision of information and reports to the Corporation.
- The College contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and KCSIE 2026, including providing a coordinated offer of family help for students who require this by providing help and support as soon as problems emerge. Family help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Safeguarding arrangements consider the procedures and practice of the Local Authorities and Safeguarding Partners.
- Governors are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

Principal

The Principal will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Corporation are effectively implemented and followed by all staff.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of students.
- Allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff or adult working at the College may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person are notified to the Local Authority Allegations Manager/Local Authority Designated Officer.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding students, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.

- All staff are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns to a DSL and that if all else fails to report these directly to Children's Social Care Services or the Police.

3 REFERRAL PROCESS

The College will refer safeguarding concerns to the City/County Department of Children and Young People's Services or the Police, where this is deemed appropriate. In cases of risk of radicalisation there is a standard Prevent referral process.

The College adheres to agreed processes for referral for each relevant agency. Referrals will only normally be undertaken by the identified Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies.

Dealing with disclosure of abuse: The College procedure for reporting concerns

The College has procedures for reporting cases of suspected abuse of young people. These procedures are highlighted to all members of staff and all staff newly appointed to the College during their induction. Clear, accessible and widely promoted systems additionally enable students to confidently report safeguarding concerns.

Staff should report all concerns via email: safeguarding@wqe.ac.uk or phone: 0800 061 4222

The College Safeguarding Team use CPOMS to record safeguarding concerns and share these files, where appropriate, with external agencies.

All staff are aware that students may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the Safeguarding Team if they have concerns about a child. The Safeguarding Team recognise that it is important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication and staff are trained accordingly.

4 RECORDS, MONITORING AND TRANSFER

4.1 Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. All staff are clear about the need to record, and report concerns about a student within the College. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed to other agencies.

4.2 Records are stored apart from normal records.

4.3 Safeguarding records and related Police Data Protection requests are stored securely, with access confined to specific staff in or associated with the Safeguarding Team.

4.4 Safeguarding records are reviewed regularly to check whether any action or updating is needed. These records are updated following any intervention, meeting etc.

4.5 When students transfer to the College from college their safeguarding records should also be transferred. Best practice is for these to be received directly by a Designated Safeguarding Lead with any necessary discussion or explanation and to obtain a signed and dated record of the transfer within five working days. The Safeguarding Administrator will be responsible for liaising with all stakeholders to gather the information required.

4.6 The College has processes for DSLs to follow up on information received.

4.7 The College replicates this process when students move from the College.

4.8 The College keeps an electronic record of all safeguarding concerns using CPOMS. The College also retains paper documentation sent by external agencies in locked filing cabinets in appropriate office space.

4.9 The Safeguarding Team are responsible for ensuring that an accurate records of concerns, discussions and rationale for any decisions and outcomes are detailed in CPOMS.

5 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND COLLEGE STAFF

Support for students:

5.1. WQE recognises that students who are/have been abused, neglected or exploited or who witness/have witnessed violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and experience challenges related to their trauma. For such students, WQE may be one of the few stable, secure and predictable components of their lives. Other students may be vulnerable because they have a disability, are in care/care leavers, live in temporary accommodation or are experiencing some form of neglect. WQE will seek to provide such students with the necessary support and to build their self-esteem and confidence, working with external agencies as relevant.

5.2. WQE recognises that students sometimes display abusive behaviour themselves and that such incidents or allegations are recorded and referred for appropriate support and intervention.

5.3. At WQE students are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Students are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Our PPM Team communicate/meet with all students in weekly group sessions and deliver safety materials and advice. They additionally meet students on a 1-2-1 basis throughout the academic year. Our Welfare and Skills Team work with identified groups of vulnerable

students in both a proactive and reactive manner (following referrals from staff and student self-referrals), to educate regarding the risks of abuse, online risk and extremism etc.

5.4. The College strictly adheres to the Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges 2025 (including Cyber Security Standards). When students use the College's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our online filtering and monitoring systems. Office 365 Compliance software further complements internet filtering, ensuring that all communications are tracked. Inappropriate language, imagery, suggestive language or imagery and 'slang' language are all tracked by the system and a report produced for the DSL. Microsoft Teams chat and email have 24/7 monitoring, and non-compliance is attached to College disciplinary procedures. This is regularly reviewed by the Safeguarding Governor when completing on-site visits and in Safeguarding Team meetings as part of their cycle of business and when incidents of concern arise. However, many students can access the internet using their own data plan and 4G/5G networks. To minimise inappropriate use, as a college we discuss this issue openly in PPM sessions and in 1-2-1 PPM sessions.

We engage in webinars and seminars held by external agencies and have a close working relationship with our local police force, who offer frequent in-college support sessions for all students, as well as bespoke, personalised workshops. We work closely with parents/carers to educate them regarding the potential issues on students accessing unfiltered internet content.

5.5. The College provides an anonymous reporting service called Whisper that enables students to text, online chat or email a concern anonymously. This is to encourage disclosure and is monitored by the Safeguarding Team.

5.6. The College works in conjunction with the University of Leicester (UOL) to provide a SafeZone service for students (and staff). Students can log into the app via their phone and press for help in emergency situations. UOL are contracted to provide a rapid support service within the agreed SafeZone boundary.

5.7. Some students have an increased risk of abuse and exploitation, and additional barriers can exist for some students with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise students' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all staff in the Safeguarding Team understand and appreciate that students need the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. We give special consideration to students who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality LGBTQ+
- Are gender questioning
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence

- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from College to be home educated
- Pupils with a family member in prison or who are affected by parental offending
- Pupils at risk of honour-based abuse (such as female genital mutilation or forced marriage)
- Pupils who have unexplainable and/or persistent absences from College, including persistent absences for part of the College day

5.8. The Safeguarding Team will ensure that the implementation of an appropriate adult, where required, takes place. This is in line with PACE Code C 2019.

5.9. As identified in KCSIE 2026, young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. WQE does not tolerate any form of abuse and all concerns relating to child-on-child abuse should be reported following the agreed safeguarding procedure; young people themselves may not report the abuse.

As young people in our care, WQE will support both the victims and perpetrators of abuse. Support is offered via the Welfare & Skills and Safeguarding Teams; it may be via internal systems or via referrals to external providers. Risk assessments are completed as appropriate.

Support for staff:

5.10. As part of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of students, staff may hear information, either from the student as part of a disclosure or from another adult that will be upsetting. Where a member of staff is distressed because of dealing with a safeguarding concern, they should in the first instance speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about the support they require. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should seek to arrange the necessary support.

5.11. The College provides an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), a 24/7 service which staff can use for support if required. They provide services such as counselling, legal advice, emergency advice, housing advice etc.

5.12. All Safeguarding Team members (and staff who have supported safeguarding concerns such as Human Resources and Welfare and Welfare) are offered with specialist safeguarding supervision once every half term for 1.5 hours (or following a specific safeguarding event if not a member of safeguarding team). Additional supervision is provided if required.

5.13. All College staff have access to the SafeZone app both on their mobile devices and on College desktop computers - (see 5.7)

6 WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

WQE will:

- Ensure that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on the College and staff for safeguarding by setting out its obligations in relevant marketing information and formats.
- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of Children & Family Services, Children's Social Care or another agency, unless to do so would place the student at risk of harm or compromise an investigation.

7 STAFF TRAINING

7.1. All newly appointed staff and Governors receive full safeguarding and Prevent training within our induction process; all are required to sign agreeing that they have read and understood the statutory documents and training delivered.

Staff and Governors receive annual Safeguarding and Prevent refresher training sessions and complete on-line training tasks to illustrate their understanding.

All staff will receive training adequate to familiarise them with safeguarding issues and their responsibilities and the College's procedures and policies, with refresher training annually and termly updates.

7.2. In line with guidance in KCSIE 2026, WQE supplements this training with regular updates and bulletins. These are produced at least termly and circulated to all staff. Staff are required to confirm having received, read and understood these briefings and that they form part of their legislative requirement to update.

7.3. The College may focus training on issues specific to its circumstances.

7.4. The College maintains records of all training undertaken.

8 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES

The College has written recruitment and selection procedures. The policy and procedures are designed with the aim of safely recruiting staff and governors and providing a safe environment for young people to learn in. Key aspects of the procedures and processes are as follows:

- Job Descriptions are available for all roles. All jobs contain explicit responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students, having due regard to the College's Safeguarding Policy.
- A Person Specification setting out the key selection criteria for all roles. The person specification includes demonstrating commitment to safeguarding policies and the suitability to work with young adults.
- A standard application form that provides for the collection of information on applicants that enables the College to recruit safely.
- Advertising of posts externally as appropriate.
- A requirement for those appointed to produce documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications.

- Standard interview questions for appointments for key staff who work with young people exploring their suitability in this respect. Interviewers follow up on any gaps or discrepancies in the employment history of applicants.
- Candidates are invited to give details of two referees, one of whom must be their current or most recent employer. If a candidate is not currently working with children/young people but has done so in the past, the College will obtain an additional reference from the employer by whom the candidate was most recently employed in working with children/young people. If a candidate is newly qualified, one of their references must come from their most recent education provider.
- A policy on obtaining a satisfactory DBS disclosure and 'barred list' check for appropriate positions as a condition of employment at the College. The College will also source prohibition order checks where relevant.

Staff recruitment

- The College's procedures for recruiting staff pay due regard to safeguarding issues. The Human Resources department produces working procedures to ensure this.
- All Governors and co-opted members to committees are also required to undergo enhanced DBS checks.
- The Human Resources department will regularly review its recruitment procedures in the light of any change in advice concerning safeguarding issues that relates to the recruitment and selection process and ensure that the College is compliant in staff being trained in Safer Recruitment.
- At least one person on any recruitment panel must have undertaken Safer Recruitment training.
- In the case of contractors working on the site during term time, the duties of the College in relation to safeguarding will be made clear to those who would be supervising the work. Where building contractors' staff could come into contact with young people, arrangements will be made with the contractors, via the contract if possible, for appropriate checks to be made. Contractors and/or visitors for whom it is not applicable to make a full check will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. For all contracted staff in regular contact with students there must be an awareness of this Policy. It will be a requirement of the College contract with a contractor that the contracted staff undertake regular and appropriate training, provided by that contractor.
- An introduction to the College's safeguarding procedures will form part of the induction process for all new staff. All new staff, including temporary and agency staff, will be given a copy of this policy and of any appropriate guidance from the Safeguarding Partners. There is specific reference to the Prevent agenda as part of this training.
- Refresher and updated training for all staff is arranged and determined by guidance or an identified need concerning a specific matter.
- In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) Guidance, the College will conduct an online search which may include social media for all shortlisted candidates, as part of the interview process. The search will only include publicly available information using the candidate's name and any previous names used. The information will be entered into an internet search engine. Any information not related to suitability for the role will not be considered. Appropriate information found as part of the search will be considered by the interview panel, who may speak to the candidate about any findings during the interview process. This information is used to determine a

candidate's suitability to work with children as part of the KCSIE guidance (2026). Candidates will be informed that we undertake online searches as part of our recruitment process.

9 Staff Allegations

Procedures for managing staff allegations and low-level concerns are explained in detail within section 28 of the Safeguarding Information Booklet. This is available via the following link: [Safeguarding Staff Hub - Home](#)

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, trainee teacher volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of college

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Principal, or the chair of governors where the Principal is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the college may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Meeting with a student in a secluded area or behind a closed door without appropriate justification

- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the college's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Principal will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Principal will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the college's staff code of conduct.

10 Whistle-blowing Policy

Where there are concerns about the way that safeguarding is carried out in the College, staff should refer to the Whistle-blowing Policy.

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- A legal obligation has been breached
- There has been a miscarriage of justice
- The health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- The environment has been damaged
- Information about any of the above has been concealed

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government; the number is 0800 800 5000.

Appendices to this policy outline procedure for reporting concerns and do not form part of the main Policy. These Appendices form part of internal Safeguarding Information Handbook and include:

- The duty to report
- What to do if you notice abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Types of abuse
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Dealing with a disclosure
- Confidentiality
- Risks posed by students

There is also additional information and guidance covering the following specific issues:

- Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning (LGBTQ+)
- Safeguarding students susceptible to extremism and radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage (so-called Honour-based abuse)
- Upskirting
- Child criminal exploitation: County Lines
- Homelessness
- Children absent from education
- Child with family members in prison
- Children in the court system – HM Courts and Tribunals Service, 2017b
- Cyber crime
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Private fostering

Member of staff responsible for this Policy: Associate Principal (Students and Welfare)

Date approved by Corporation: September 2026

Date when this Policy and Procedures will be reviewed: September 2027