

Safeguarding Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

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1. Introduction

Coleg y Cymoedd is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all learners. We recognise that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our learners is everyone's responsibility and we are committed to always acting in the best interest of learners.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place across Coleg y Cymoedd. It also makes explicit the college's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures, ensuring that child protection and vulnerable adult concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of learners. The college has a moral and statutory duty to promote and protect the welfare of children and adults at risk and safeguard them from harm or abuse. Learners are able to access safeguarding support through the medium of Welsh, and when referring learners to external agencies, the language choice of the learner will be recognised and taken into account.

This policy, and all associated Safeguarding procedures across the college, apply to all staff, learners; apprentices also follow the [Skill Academy Wales safeguarding policy](#). Whilst staff have various levels of contact with learners, everyone must be aware of the potential indicators of neglect and abuse and be clear about what to do if they have a concern.

The college's Prevent responsibilities under the Counter terrorism and Security Act 2015 are an integral part of this policy. The College has published a Prevent Protocol¹ which details the college's obligations, the statement of policy, roles and responsibilities and the internal and external referral processes.

This policy will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and incorporates all local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. It has been completed in line with government legislation and guidance and procedures set out in the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures, Keeping Learners Safe \(2022\)](#) and local safeguarding boards ([Cwm Taf Morgannwg](#) and [Gwent](#)).

In this policy the term "Child" applies to all learners under 18 years of age, as defined by the Children Act 1989.

This policy applies to all learners on all learning programmes regardless of mode or location of study.

¹ Protocol can be found on the website and Staff Portal

This policy applies to all staff and to visitors to the college.

2. Policy Statements

The safeguarding leads in the college are responsible for keeping up to date with any changes to existing legislation and guidance and any new legislation or guidance. The safeguarding teams operate the following principles and seek to:

- understand the context and identify the risks;
- take action to prevent and reduce harm;
- develop in learners the skills and resilience to avoid, resist and recover from harm; and
- engage with parents/carers, staff, partner agencies and the wider community to reduce the risk of harm.

The college will:

- adopt Safer Recruitment principles, including DBS checks and EWC registration;
- provide advice and guidance for all visitors and new members of staff to ensure the welfare of our learners is of paramount concern; and
- provide regular training and guidance to all staff and governors.

The college will support all learners by:

- developing the tutorial programme and curriculum content to inform learners and allow opportunities to discuss safeguarding issues, including peer-on-peer abuse and preventing radicalisation;
- maintaining a college ethos that promotes a positive, inclusive environment, where all feel safe and are valued;
- recording and managing all concerns reported;
- conducting risk assessments as needed; and
- collaborating with internal and external colleagues to identify and reduce risks.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of learners and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- Protecting our learners from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of learners' health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all learners to have the best outcomes

The safeguarding leads² in the college ensure that the college complies with all statutory legislation, including the Prevent Duty. Detail on designated safeguarding roles can be found in the appendices.

Child Protection

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures that detail how to respond to concerns about a child. For definitions of harm (including abuse and neglect), see the appendices.

Prevent Duty

The college recognises its duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. All staff will receive training and guidance on the Prevent Duty so that they are able to identify learners who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and understand how to report their concerns. Staff must be alert to changes in a learner's behaviour that could indicate that they may need protection.

It is the responsibility of the DSPs in each organisation to raise awareness of the risks of radicalisation and ensure all stakeholders have adequate training. The DSP at Coleg y Cymoedd will keep up to date with current local and national threats and issues regarding radicalisation, including an awareness of the current, largest threat to their learners. Collaboration with external organisations is essential to achieving this.

The college will seek to build learners' resilience to radicalisation through the promotion of British values, democratic principles and the promotion of respect for other cultures.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill - Martyn's Law

The college understands its responsibilities in keeping learners, staff and visitors safe on each campus. The safeguarding leads meet regularly with Counter Terrorist Security Advisors and the Head of Infrastructure in the college to assess risk and complete 'preparedness' plans. These plans will ensure the college is compliant with the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill when it becomes an Act. For more information on Martyn's Law, see the Welsh Government's *Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill – Explanatory notes (May 2023)*.

² See appendix 1

3. Specific Safeguarding Support

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

The college takes bullying and harassment seriously and is committed to ensuring all learners are treated equally and with respect. Sexual misconduct and harassment will not be tolerated. This responsibility refers to individuals when they are both in and out of our organisations and includes use of the internet and electronic communication devices such as email, mobile phones, games consoles, social networking sites etc.

The college recognises that there is the potential for abuse between young people, and staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff will follow guidance on tutorials and follow the college's safeguarding procedures to report and manage any concerns.

This policy has been reviewed using Welsh Government guidance, '[Guidance for education settings on peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour](#)' and Estyn's report [Peer-on-peer sexual harassment among 16 to 18-year-old learners in further education](#) (June 2023). For more information please read the organisations' Bullying and Harassment policies and procedures.

Vulnerable Learners

Some learners are more vulnerable than others due to a specific care or support need and individual or home circumstances. They include learners who:

- are on, or have been on, the Child Protection register;
- are looked after or care-experienced;
- are young carers;
- are asylum seekers;
- have experienced significant trauma (recent or historic);
- have additional learning needs (ALN); and/or
- have a disability.

The College will provide additional support for vulnerable learners as required. The safeguarding teams in each organisation will work with internal and external colleagues to identify and provide this support, signposting learners to external organisations as appropriate.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with within this policy. The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states; "FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a

number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

The College recognises that the practice of FGM in the UK is a criminal offence and all staff will report concerns that FGM has been, or is about to be, carried out on a learner under the age of 18 to the police.

Forced Marriage

Forced Marriage is a form of abuse where one or both parties are married without their freely given consent. It violates a child or young persons or vulnerable adults' human rights and can have significant physical, emotional, psychological and sexual consequences. Forced Marriage is illegal in many countries including the United Kingdom. The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 criminalises forcing someone into marriage or aiding forced marriage.

The College is committed to safeguarding all learners and staff from forced marriage and other forms of abuse. The College recognises that forced marriage is illegal in the UK and will adhere to the legislative duties and ensure that we report any such concerns as per the Wales Safeguarding Procedures to the Local Authority and Police.

Gender / Honour Based Violence (GBV/HBV)

Gender-based violence refers to any form of violence perpetrated against an individual based on their gender identity or perceived gender roles. Honour-based violence is a specific form of violence that is rooted in cultural beliefs or traditions that seek to control or regulate behaviour; commonly seen if there are perceived breaches of family or community honour.

Both forms of violence can have significant implications for the individual involved. Individuals at risk of GBV/HBV are likely to experience physical harm, emotional and psychological trauma, social isolation, impacted education or relationships within college, mutilation and even murder.

The UK recognises this form of harm and hosts legislation to support individuals at risk. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now includes coercive and psychological abuse as a form of harm. The Criminal Justice Act 2015 criminalises Forced Marriage, FGM and other forms of violence towards women and girls. The Serious Crime Act 2015 has introduced provisions to tackle HBV.

The College remains committed to the protection of learners at risk of GBV and HBV. The Safeguarding and Wellbeing team is equipped with the skills and ability to recognise these forms of abuse and acts in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Safer Recruitment

The People and Culture (P&C) department at the college complies with safer recruitment procedures including:

- undertaking Disclosure and Barring checks to ensure that all staff are suitable for employment,
- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults,
- responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process,
- responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role, and
- ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction that includes safeguarding/child protection.

The department also has clear policies and procedures relating to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks) and staff conduct relating to safeguarding. It ensures that members of staff who are Education Workforce Council of Wales (EWC) registrants are aware of the Code of Professional Conduct and the expectation within the Code regarding the safety and well-being of learners in their care and related safeguarding content.

The department has policies and procedures for managing allegations about members of staff and will demonstrate the college's duty of care to support all involved during the process. See P&C policies and procedures for more information.

Online Safety

Each organisation will refer to Welsh Government guidance and advice described in [the Live-streaming and video-conferencing: safeguarding principles and practice](#) document to ensure that our learner community remains safe whilst learning online. Regular advice and training will be delivered to both staff and learners regarding online safety.

The college recognises that learners are under considerable pressure from social media apps and sites, that can have a negative impact on their safety and wellbeing. The college has a designated Digital Wellbeing Officer who is responsible for supporting learners to stay safe online. For more information, visit the Learner Portal.

The Online Safety Act 2023 places a duty on organisations to regulate online platforms and enhance the protection our learners have against accessing harmful content online. This includes:

- Cyber Bullying
- Grooming
- Extremist or radicalistic material
- Accessing or sharing misinformation
- Pornographic and sexually harmful materials

The college recognises the importance of online safety and endorses the safeguards set out to protect both learners and staff. As part of our continued commitment to safeguarding, the college adheres to the principles set out in the Act, ensuring that our digital platforms and online resources promote a safe, encouraging and respectful learning environment for all.

The AP for Learner Experience and Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding will continue to work with the Head of IT to ensure that all systems used by staff and learners are compliant with the regulatory requirements.

The People and Culture team also remain committed to safeguarding staff and have policies and procedures in place to support this. The team will complete a referral to the Local Authority and follow the Section 5 Professional Concerns process as set out by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Wales Safeguarding Procedures as necessary.

Risk Assessments

In some instances, it will be necessary to complete a risk assessment to assess the risk to learners (including themselves), staff and/or college property an applicant or learner may present. The risk assessment will be created by a member of the safeguarding team as directed by the HoWS or APLE, in collaboration with internal and external colleagues as needed, e.g., tutors, social workers, police, probation officer etc. and will be signed off by the DSP (Designated Safeguarding Person). The HoWS and APLE will use the risk matrix to identify the level of risk.

If it is deemed safe for the learner to attend college (with control mechanisms in place), the HoWS will meet with the learner to discuss the risk assessment and will arrange check-ins with the learner to monitor progress. If it is deemed unsuitable for a learner to attend college, the learner will be contacted by email and post to notify them of the decision to withdraw their place at college.

A learner may appeal the decision if they can evidence that they can mitigate the risks described. The appeal must be sent by email or letter to the Principal within 10 days of receiving the contact regarding withdrawal of a place in college.

4. Reporting Concerns

When to be Concerned

Learners could be at risk in their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Abuse could take the form of:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Financial abuse
- Psychological abuse

For signs and indicators of abuse, see appendix 2.

Duty to Report

All stakeholders (including staff, governors and visitors) have a duty to report safeguarding concerns in line with the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#)³. A report must be made if a person has a concern or suspicion that a learner:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm⁴;
- has needs for care and support;
- has needs for care and support, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse, neglect or the risk of it.

If any person has knowledge, **concerns** or suspicions that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to the organisation's safeguarding team. This ensures that **social services** or the police can be informed, who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE.



When to contact the Police

The college understands the importance of safeguarding and protecting the most vulnerable learners and on occasions, the police need to be informed. The National Police Chiefs' Council has released information for colleges and schools that set out comprehensive guidance to organisations on when to contact the police.

The guidance covers a wide range of scenarios, including criminal activity, safeguarding issues, sexual offences, cyber crime, weapons, emergencies and offers clear protocols and consideration for decision making.

The College is committed to working closely with South Wales and Gwent police to ensure the safety and protection of our learners and staff.

³ See Safeguarding Procedures

⁴ See appendix 2

The guidance can be accessed here:

- [When to call the Police; Guidance for Schools and Colleges](#)

5. Links to Policies & Procedures

College policies and procedures can be found on the [college website](#).

Linked policies/statements/procedures include:

- Prevent Protocol
- Safeguarding Procedures
- Learner Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Learner Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Whole College Approach to Behaviour
- Young Carers Policy
- Slavery and Human Trafficking Document
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Information Sharing Protocols
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Personal Relationships Policy (staff)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Reporting Routes document
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse at Work Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

6. Legislation and Guidance

Safeguarding procedures across the college, must take the following legislation into consideration:

- [Peer-on-peer sexual harassment among 16 to 18-year-old learners in further education | Estyn \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021](#)
- [The Protection of Freedom Acts \(2012\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)

- [The Children Act \(2004\)](#)
- [The Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- [The Education Act \(2002\)](#)
- [The Prevent Strategy \(2011\)](#)
- [In Safe Hands: Implementing Adult Protection Procedures in Wales](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance for Further Education \(2021\)](#)
- [Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#)
- [Keeping Learners Safe \(2021\) document no: 283/2022](#)
- [Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board](#)
- [Complaints Procedures for School Governing Bodies in Wales 2012](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Colleges Act 2006](#)
- [Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance 2003](#)
- [Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and non-teaching staff](#)
- [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) (Part 7 of the Act relates to safeguarding)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act \(2003\)](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [The Rights of Children and Young Persons \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)
- [The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act](#)
- [Forced Marriage \(Civil Protection\) Act 2007](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Online Safety Act 2023](#)

The list is not exhaustive and may be added to by future passing of statute either by UK Government or Welsh Government on matters which are devolved under Government of Wales Act 2006.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Leads

[Link to staff details from portal](#)

The Designated Senior Person (DSP) with responsibility for Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults is the Vice Principal (COO). The DSP is responsible for developing and monitoring this policy and procedure. They will be the lead contact for corporate safeguarding matters. They will ensure the Principal and governing body are made aware of serious cases.

The Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer (SDSO) is the Assistant Principal for Learner Experience. The SDSO will support the DSP in development and monitoring of the policy, offer day to day advice on policy and procedures to college staff and external agencies, and act as their deputy in their absence.

The Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding (HoWS), Directors of Learner and Campus Services (DLCS) and the Director of People and Culture are Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). The HoWS will take the main day-to-day responsibility for safeguarding across the college and is supported by Safeguarding Co-ordinators, with the DLCS taking responsibility to ensure the safeguarding procedures are followed on each campus. They will be closely supported by both the DSP and the SDSO.

The College's Designated Safeguarding Governor will meet on a termly basis with the DSP in order to be assured **that effective policies, processes and procedures** are in place for safeguarding learners.

The names and contact details of the designated members of staff will be displayed at strategic points on every campus and on the Staff Portal.

Appendix 2

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

All staff should familiarise themselves with [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) for advice and guidance.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Effective safeguarding requires:

- Every member of staff and all stakeholders to play their part and contribute to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.
- Information-sharing in accordance with guidance⁵.
- Staff to work together with internal and external colleagues to better understand our learners, their circumstances and their needs for care, support and safety.
- Developing co-productive working relationships to support learners at risk.

Safeguarding Children⁶

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding children. Every child can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity. Safeguarding legislation and government guidance states that safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

The rights of the child should be paramount to our approach.

Links below provide descriptions of the abuse, neglect and harm that may lead to a child being at risk. It is important to note that these are NOT exhaustive lists. Rather, they are provided to offer practitioners pointers that may alert them to possible abuse or neglect in an adult or child.

Physical abuse

Sexual Abuse

Neglect

Emotional Abuse and Neglect

Adults at Risk

⁵ Information sharing to safeguard children: guidance <https://gov.wales/sharing-information-safeguard-children>

⁶ The legal definition of a child is anyone under the age of 18

Adults can be at risk from the same types of abuse as children – physical, sexual and emotional. They can also be at risk of financial abuse or neglect, particularly if they rely on the support of others if they have care or support needs.

Vulnerable adults can include those who:

- have a disability;
- have a significant learning difficulty;
- are unable to protect themselves or report abuse;
- are homeless; and/or
- have a drug or alcohol addiction.

The link below leads to a description of the different forms of abuse and neglect that adults at risk may experience and ways in which the maltreatment may manifest itself. It is important to note that maltreatment may be linked to one specific incident or ongoing and/or repeated abuse and neglect. The maltreatment may result from one issue such as alcohol or drug misuse or an accumulation of circumstances and stressors, such as domestic violence and abuse, social isolation and deprivation.

Staff should be mindful that assessing harm does not mean merely listing the risk factors that are accumulating and assuming the longer the list the more likely the level of harm: just one risk factor may have a significant impact.

[Pointers for Practice: Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse and Neglect in an Adult at Risk](#)