

Policy & Procedure	Safeguarding
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Date of Review	31 August 2026
Responsible Senior Manager	Director, Communications, Engagement and Student Experience

History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes
March 2015	Safeguarding Team List Page	Updated Team List
May 2015	Safeguarding Team List Page	Updated Team List
March 2016	Various	Various changes to information and formatting
April 2017	Various	Various changes to information and new forms included
September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contents page updated • Safeguarding Membership updated page 13 • Form amendments pages 17-21 • Appendix L added page 35 	<p>Update to contents page and all links fixed as did not work.</p> <p>Safeguarding team membership details updated and incorrect contact details updated.</p> <p>Amendment to format of forms in appendices for ease of use.</p> <p>Addition of appendix L on PREVENT.</p>
November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the Safeguarding team page 7 • Safeguarding Membership updated page 13 	<p>Amended role of the Safeguarding team to include lead role – Director of Student Services & Communities pg7 – following on from British Council Inspection.</p> <p>Safeguarding team membership details updated and incorrect contact details updated.</p>
February 2020	V06	Changes to Policy as a whole. Appendices updated
May 2022	V08	<p>Re-working of policy to cognises of new operational online practice developed over past 2 years.</p> <p>Removal of old definitions, removal of old forms, links to new online material, overview of safeguarding vs wellbeing, introduction of next steps taken</p> <p>Update of key contact information for staff and role amendments.</p>

June 2025	V09	<p>Update of key information for staff and roles amendments, including Responsible Senior Manager.</p> <p>Updates regarding external guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland • Prevent Duty Guidance Scotland
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Policy Statement

This policy will ensure that West College Scotland meets its legislative and regulatory obligations in relation to the safeguarding of its students especially the children, young people and vulnerable adults within its student community. The policy will ensure that staff are made aware of their role in providing a duty of care to all students, including these vulnerable groups, and will ensure they are supported in this role by a designated safeguarding team and a set of procedures designed to enable effective implementation of protective practices.

West College Scotland's safeguarding policy and procedures are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students in relation to the following:

- Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in specific circumstances
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Prevention of radicalisation and extremism
- Protection and prevention relating to sex offenders

The procedures associated with observing this policy are appended to this policy document. Online reporting forms associated with the procedures are located on the Safeguarding section of the staff intranet.

Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion

or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email info@wcs.ac.uk

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Introduction

West College Scotland (WCS) is committed to providing a safe working and studying environments for all students. To achieve this, WCS takes reasonable steps to ensure students and staff work within a safe and supportive learning environment and that all staff know how to respond appropriately and proportionately to any safeguarding concerns that may arise.

All students have a fundamental right to care and protection. West College Scotland will ensure that staff are familiar with the College's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

The policy and associated procedures align with current legislation and standards. WCS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures should be read, and implemented, in conjunction with other, relevant, College policies, including Protection of Vulnerable Groups Procedure; Policy on Acceptable use of IT; Social Media Policy. This will ensure that students are protected in an appropriate, supportive and proportionate way.

The College is committed to effective interagency communication and collaboration with relevant external agencies. All key partners have statutory responsibilities to ensure the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. WCS will contact external agencies if appropriate and if it has been identified that there is significant risk of harm for the student.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures outlines WCS processes for protecting children, young people and adults at risk from harm, abuse and exploitation, and supporting our staff to ensure WCS's duty of care for all WCS students is undertaken. WCS recognises that students who are adults may, through personal or environmental circumstances, become temporarily at risk and therefore this procedure is applicable for all WCS students for whom staff believes there is a permanent or temporary risk to their personal safety and wellbeing.

Scope

West College Scotland has a statutory duty Under the [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#), [The Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) and [The Children and Young people \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) for the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and protected adults. This policy also takes account of the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\) – updated 2023](#).

Every member of WCS staff has a role to play in safeguarding and as such this policy and associated procedures are relevant and applicable to all staff directly employed or contracted in by WCS or those volunteering their time and services to support WCS business. The College policy is underpinned by the following:

- Children, as defined by current legislation, are those under 18 years of age.
- Protected adults, as defined by current legislation, are those over 16 years of age who are:
 - unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests.
 - at risk of harm.
 - more vulnerable because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity (Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007).

The presence of a particular condition or disability does not automatically mean that they are a protected adult. A person can have a disability but be perfectly able to look after their own wellbeing. Their circumstances should be considered, and all three elements of the definition must be met for them to be classed as a protected adult.

- Protected adults, as defined within this policy, includes students, staff, volunteers, partner representatives and designated persons i.e. social workers.
- All children, young people and protected adults have the right to be protected from abuse.
- All children, young people and protected adults should feel safe and secure while using the College or in the care of its staff.
- Staff working with children, young people and protected adults will understand the issues surrounding child protection, their duty under Prevent and be aware of good practice in relation to working with children, young people and protected adults.

Staff should report any concerns or suspicions that emerge from contact with students e.g.:

- Reports of feeling unsafe
- Anonymous allegations/ concerns
- Changes in behaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour or language
- Inappropriate use of IT

Definitions

See Appendix A for a list of relevant definitions. These definitions have been taken from a range of legal and statutory sources including legislation relating to the protection of children and adults, and guidance from the UK and Scottish governments and their associated agencies.

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The WCS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures keep staff and students safe by promoting a positive, professional and caring ethos for all students, but particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.

WCS Safeguarding Procedures expect staff who have concerns about the welfare or safety of any student to take responsibility for passing on these concerns to the Safeguarding Team. WCS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures ensures that the Safeguarding Team responds as soon as possible by passing information on to the most appropriate external agencies.

Concerns about **school pupils** who attend the College should be reported directly to Campus School Liaison Coordinators. These concerns will be passed to pastoral care staff in schools who will take appropriate action including referrals, if required, to child protection agencies. Staff are expected to take a proactive approach to identifying and responding to potential risks by alerting a member of the WCS Safeguarding Team, within 24 hours, to ensure safeguarding procedures are implemented.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have duty of care responsibilities to protect vulnerable students and should report any safeguarding concerns.

Role of Staff

Staff **do not** have any responsibility or authority to investigate any reports of safeguarding concerns. The role for staff is to report concerns to the Safeguarding Team, who will implement the necessary procedures.

Good safeguarding practice is based on 5 basic principles:

- Listen
- Respond
- Report
- Record
- Review

Safeguarding concerns may come to the attention of the staff through:

- observation
- direct disclosure
- indirect disclosure-someone shares the information about another person
- historical allegations

If staff are concerned, they should:

- Report a safeguarding disclosure or concern via our staff intranet. [The safeguarding tab is on the left-hand vertical menu.](#)
- The [online reporting form](#) must be completed so an assigned member of the Safeguarding Team can respond appropriately to the concern raised.
- Avoid asking inappropriate or intrusive questions.
- Offer reassurance to the student.

- Reassure the student that **the information must be passed on**, but that it will be handled in a confidential manner and passed onto staff with additional responsibility for safeguarding.
- Do not discuss the matter with other members of staff apart from WCS Safeguarding Team.
- Follow the guidance given by members of the Safeguarding Team.
- Encourage adult students to meet with College Counsellors.

Role of Safeguarding Team

The College Safeguarding Team is led by the Director of Communications, Engagement and Student Experience. The role of the Safeguarding Team is to respond appropriately to concerns raised by staff and to implement the safeguarding procedures. Members of the Safeguarding Team **do not** have responsibility or authority to investigate reported incidents and should not get overly involved with incidents.

When concerns have been reported, the Safeguarding Team member will:

- treat the grounds for concern (as reported by the member of staff) as URGENT.
- consider the immediate needs of the student.
- take emergency action, if required, within 24 hours.
- gather information and, if appropriate, seek clarification (not proof).
- ask staff to record relevant information.
- contact duty social worker /police if there are grounds for concern.
- forward WCS safeguarding documentation to appropriate external agency/agencies.
- contact WCS Executive Team immediately if a staff member is alleged to be involved in any incident.
- monitor and evaluate policy and procedures on a regular basis.
- meet regularly with the designated Senior Manager to review concerns and improve practice.
- ensure secure storage of information.
- annually the College will ensure safeguarding awareness is referenced throughout all campus locations for students and staff.

Role of Senior Management Team

It is, ultimately, the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure effective safeguarding practices and procedures exist to protect all students at the College. This responsibility will be discharged through the Senior Management Team.

The Senior Management Team will designate a Senior Manager – Director of Communications, Engagement and Student Experience - with responsibility for leading on safeguarding practices and who will:

- Lead on regular discussions and developments of the Safeguarding Team.
- Produce an annual report (statistical report) for SMT and the Board of Management.
- Lead the team in evaluation of the procedures on an annual basis to ensure that the policy and procedures are working effectively. The team will review the use of the policy and procedures, as implemented, on a case-by-case basis and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Liaise with teaching staff, where appropriate, to promote safeguarding; being alert to signs and indicators of possible risks in classes e.g. bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, homophobia; and raising concerns with a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Training and Development

The Senior Manager will, in collaboration with the Organisational Development Team:

- Ensure all staff undertake appropriate training aligned to legislative and corporate requirements.
- Will ensure that staff receive update and refresher training through induction process and annual updates.
- Ensure the members of the Safeguarding Team undertake training and development relevant to their specialist role.
- All staff complete refresher training every 3 years.

Protection and Prevention

West College Scotland is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its staff and students and the duty of care responsibilities, whilst implicit in its ethos, vision and culture, are explicit in its Safeguarding policies and practices.

Generally, safeguarding applies to all students, regardless of age, protected characteristic or any other categorisation. Explicitly, the College's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures covers 5 specific areas of concern:

- Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in specific circumstances.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Prevention of radicalisation and extremism.
- Protection and prevention relating to sex offenders.

Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults

The WCS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures aims to protect:

- Children and young people up to 18 years of age.
- Vulnerable adults over 16 who are unable to support and protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

It aims to protect against all forms of abuse and neglect, namely:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

WCS staff should be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse. Descriptions and definitions can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in specific circumstances

In addition to the above concerns, the Policy and Procedures will apply to any concerns relating to child protection in specific circumstances.

These specific circumstances include concerns relating to:

- Domestic abuse
- Parental alcohol and drug misuse
- Disability
- Non-engaging families
- Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems
- Children and young people experiencing or affected by parental mental health problems
- Harmful or problematic sexual behaviour
- Female genital mutilation
- Honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Ritual abuse
- Abuse by organised networks or multiple abusers
- Child trafficking
- Historical allegations of abuse
- Children who are looked after away from home
- Online and mobile phone child safety
- Children and young people who place themselves at risk
- Children and young people who are missing
- Underage sexual activity
- Bullying

Please refer to Appendix A for definitions and descriptions of these specific circumstances.

Mental health and wellbeing

The College is committed to supporting and protecting students affected by mental health problems. Concerns about a student's mental health, especially where there is a risk of harm to the student, should be referred to [any member](#) of the Safeguarding Team, and should not be unnecessarily restricted to a member of the team based in the same campus as the student or member of staff.

Please note that the College Counsellors may also be a source of advice and support and appointments can be arranged via Student Advisory Services or directly with the Counsellors.

Prevention of radicalisation and extremism

The College is legally required to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into extremism and terrorism (PREVENT). WCS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures aim to protect vulnerable individuals from all forms of non-violent and violent extremism.

This includes:

- Online extremism
- Radicalisation
- Hate crime
- Human trafficking
- Online safety
- Spirit possession
-

Any concerns about students at risk from being drawn into extremism should be referred directly to the Assistant Principal Student Life and Skills. If not available, then contact the Director of Finance, or the Director of Communications, Policy and Engagement. (See Appendix I)

Protection and prevention relating to sex offenders

Sex Offenders are expected (by their supervising agency) to disclose their status when applying for, or enrolling on, a college course. The supervising agency will check, either with the offender, or with the College, that the disclosure has been made, and is correct.

It is probable that the disclosure will be made to the member of staff who interviews the individual prior to offering a place, but it is more likely that the disclosure will not be made until the student has started the course. Sometimes the status is identified before the individual has disclosed to staff.

The College then must assess the risk to staff, students, and the individual concerned, considering any conditions required to protect all concerned and to prevent re-offending.

When an offender discloses to staff, or if staff discover the status of the individual, then the matter should be referred directly to the Director of Communications, Engagement and

Student Experience, and if not available, then to the Head of Student Services, who will then invoke the necessary procedure. (See Appendix E)

APPENDIX A - Definitions

Abuse

A broad definition of abuse is all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Adult at Risk

Someone who is aged 16 or over and who is or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Child

A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts but for our purposes in WCS a child is defined as an individual under the age of 18. In the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 a 'child' is defined for the purposes of all Parts of that Act as someone who has not attained the age of 18.

Child Protection

Child protection means protecting a child from abuse or neglect. In a college setting this would be a student under the age of 18 who may be at risk of harm and/or abuse. Social Work Services and Police Protection Units investigate allegations of abuse and/or harm. No WCS member of staff investigates allegations. Staff with additional responsibility ensure that the correct information is referred to external agencies.

Duty of Care

WCS's responsibility to use professional expertise and judgement to protect and promote the best interests of students and staff, and to ensure that we exercise an appropriate level of care towards them, as is reasonable within the parameters of our relationship.

E-Safety

E-Safety encompasses not only Internet technologies but also electronic communications via mobile phones, games consoles and wireless technology. It highlights the need to educate children and young people about the benefits, risks and responsibilities of using information technology.

Exploitation

Exploitation includes the exploitation, or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation forced labour or services, slavery or practices like slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Gender Based Violence

This is the physical, psychological, emotional and sexual harm inflicted on an individual because of their gender. The term is generally used when the harm is the consequence of a perceived power of one gender over another, however it is accepted that gender-based violence can take place within same sex relationships as a misuse of perceived power. WCS would refer all staff to our Gender Based Violence Student Policy

Harm

Harm is most broadly defined as being all harmful conduct, but more specifically is conduct which causes physical, psychological or self-harm or unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests.

Safeguarding

Carrying out WCS's general Duty of Care in relation to students and staff, ensuring the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk.

Trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by the means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to

obtain the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

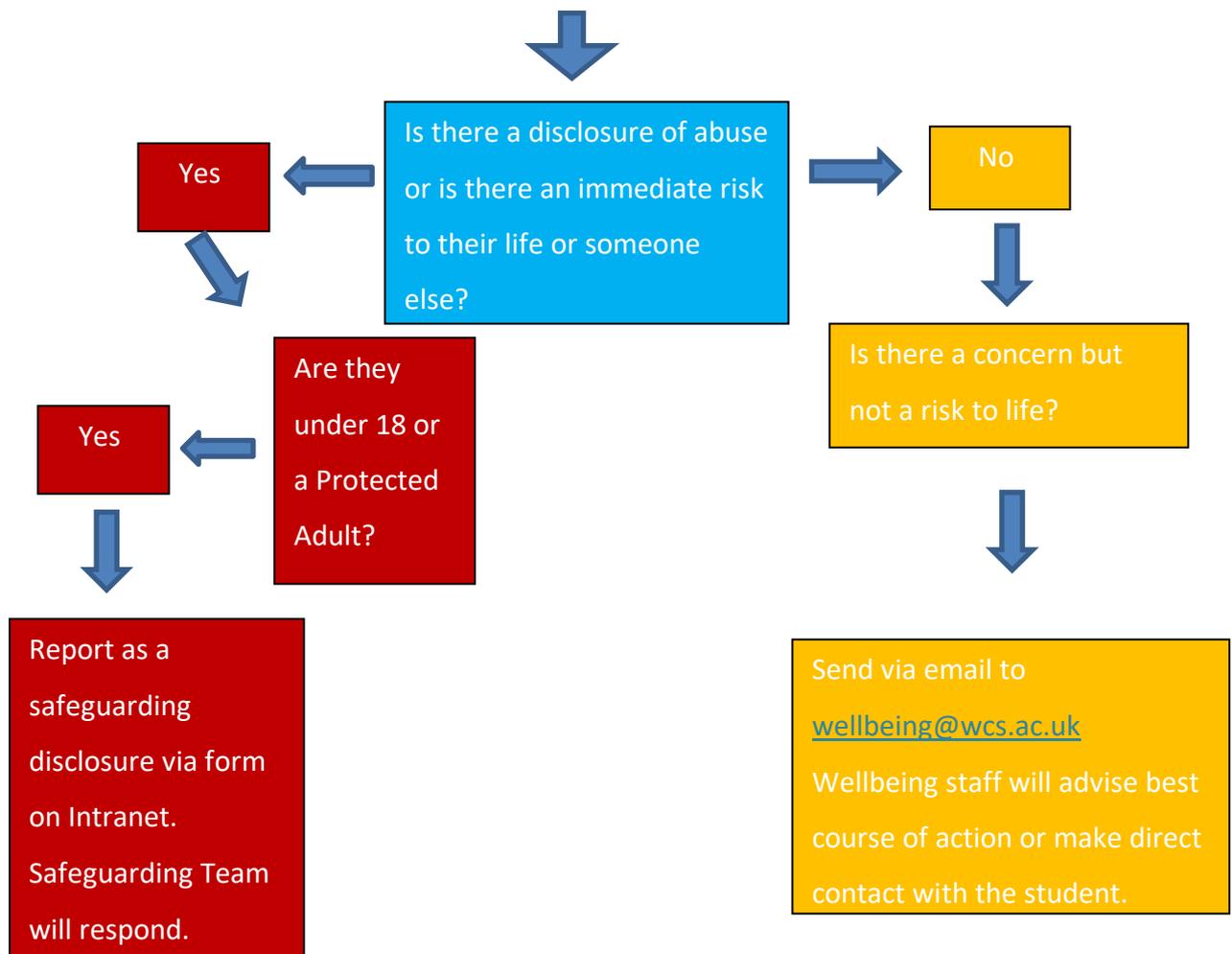
Vulnerable Adult

Vulnerable Adult is the term that was previously used to refer to someone we would most often now refer to as an Adult at Risk.

APPENDIX B - Directly Related Legislation

- The Children (Scotland) Act 2020
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015
- Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Updated 2017
- Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Equally Safe 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – Revised 2023

APPENDIX C- Safeguarding Flow chart and how to report



References

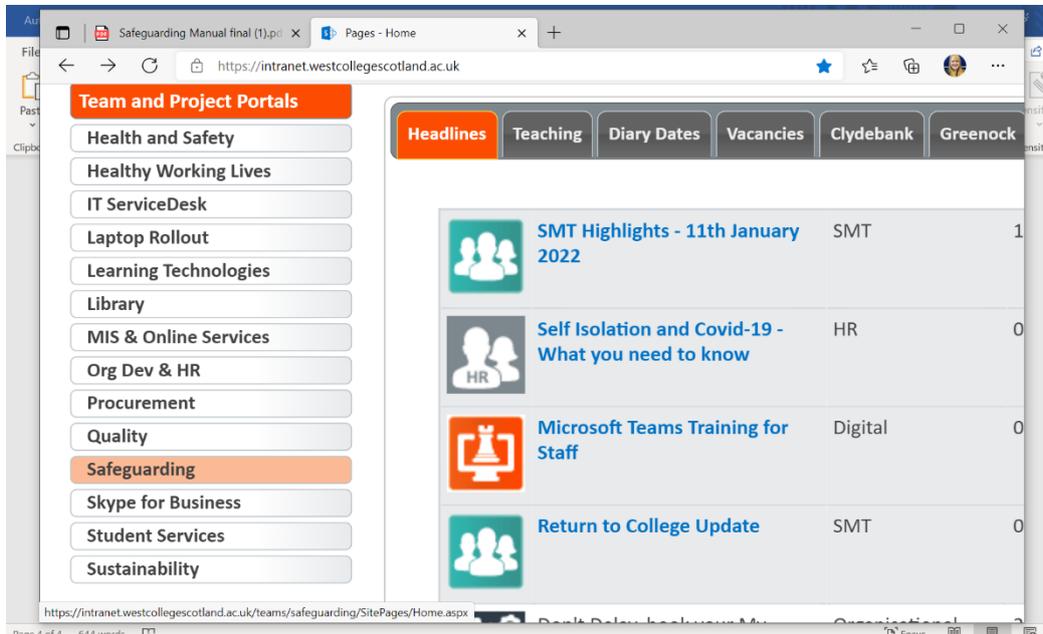
- Examples of abuse - Physical, Emotional, Financial, Sexual and Neglect
- Risk to life - when someone has a suicide plan or is in the process of ending their life*
- Risk to life by threatening violence in an emergency phone 999 *For more information please refer to the Crisis Action Plan in the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Guidance for

A Protected Adult is defined as someone who is:

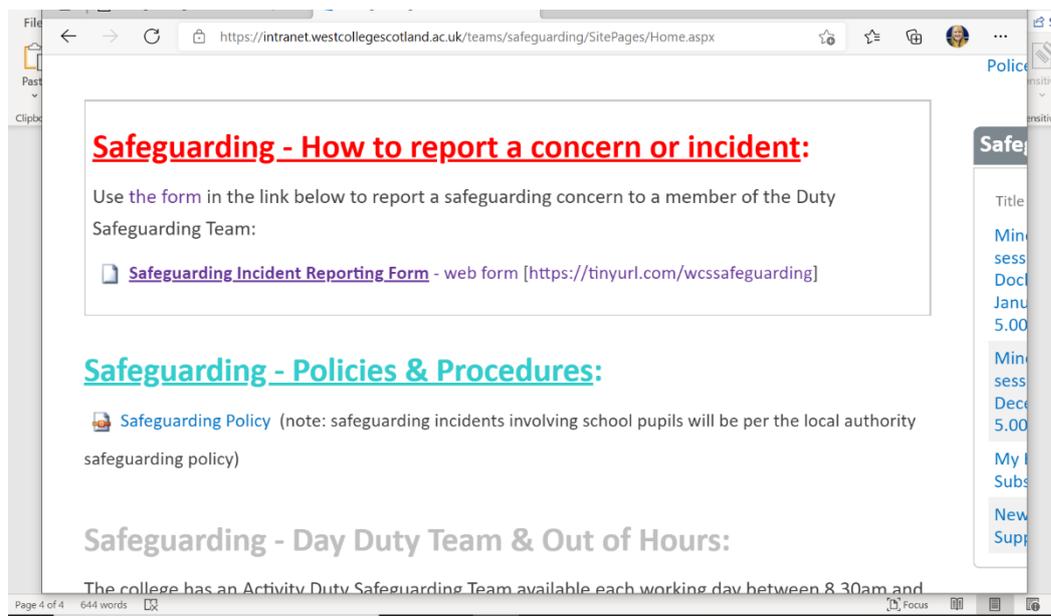
- over 16 and
- is unable to safeguard themselves, their property, rights or other interests, and
- is at risk of harm, and
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed by others who are not so affected (Scottish Government)

How to Report Safeguarding

1. College staff report a safeguarding disclosure or concern via our staff intranet. The safeguarding tab is on the left-hand vertical menu.



2. Staff should complete the form with all the information required. (Staff should give as much information as possible.)



3. When the form is submitted, the Safeguarding Teams receives an email alert to make them aware of the report. This is priority work so everything else is dropped by the wellbeing team to focus on the safeguarding email. If you are unsure whether an issue

needs to be raised on a safeguarding form, please contact Wellbeing@wcs.ac.uk in the first instance.

4. The referring lecturer will be contacted by the safeguarding lead to assure them the issue is being investigated and obtain any further information. They will also be updated as developments are made.
5. For any issue where there is an immediate risk to life*, please contact the Safeguarding Team.
6. In an emergency where staff or students are in immediate danger call 999.
7. Staff should not phone social work as this is the remit of the Safeguarding Team.
8. Staff should only call the police (999) if they or students are in immediate danger.

****Immediate risk to life examples:**

1. Student discloses they are suicidal with a plan and refuse to stay in college, or
2. Student discloses abuse, and it is unsafe for them to leave the college building.

What is a Safeguarding and what is a Wellbeing Concern?

Safeguarding

Is either



If there is an immediate risk to the life of the individual or someone else.

Or



If abuse disclosed is either in relation to the student or someone else under the age of 18 or a Protected Adult.

Wellbeing Concern

Is either



When there are concerns regarding the information disclosed (except when the information disclosed is about abuse) by a student in relation to themselves or someone else under 18 or a Protected Adult.

Or



If abuse is disclosed by a student in relation to themselves or to someone else and they are over 18.

A Protected Adult is defined as someone who is over 16

- and is unable to safeguard themselves, their property, rights or other interests
 - and is at risk of harm
 - and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than others who are not so affected
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.**

APPENDIX D– What happens next?

Once a safeguarding report has been received, the following steps may be taken by the Safeguarding Team. If a student makes a safeguarding disclosure their age and circumstances will determine what actions are taken.

Under 16

Report will be made to police and/or social work.

16-17

Reports will be made to police if they are in danger and to social work if they are a Protected Adult or if they already have a social worker, or in cases of human trafficking, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by someone in a position of trust. Otherwise, the Safeguarding Team will provide the student with the appropriate advice and support to contact a community support service or to make a police report. If the student wishes not to report it or not receive input from a support service, then there is nothing we can do except respect that decision. The Safeguarding Team can also make a hate crime, domestic abuse or stalking report directly to the police. This can be done without the student's permission if there is a serious risk to the student or another individual.

Over 18

The Safeguarding Team can only provide students with advice and support to contact the police and support services unless there is an immediate risk to life or if they are a Protected Adult. If the student wishes not to report it or not to obtain help from community support services, then there is nothing the College can do except respect that decision. The Safeguarding Team can also make a hate crime, domestic abuse or stalking report directly to the police. This can be done with the student's permission and without when there is a serious risk to the student or another individual.

All ages

If there is an immediate risk to life, then depending on the situation the Safeguarding Team will either call the police and/or social work or the next of kin.

Cause for concern

For wellbeing concerns, the Safeguarding Team will provide advice and support and will monitor the situation. Staff will be asked to keep the Safeguarding Team up to date.

Homelessness for 16-17 years

Social work is only contacted if the student still has a social worker, is with Throughcare/Aftercare or if they are a protected/vulnerable adult. This is because they are classed as an adult at 16 under housing regulations. If they do not present in one of these groups, they must contact the local council to advise they are homeless.

Members of the public who may pose a risk

If a student makes a member of staff aware that there is a member of the public who poses a risk to them (this could be with or without police involvement) please contact the Wellbeing Team. They will speak to the student and if appropriate they will make the Estates team aware of this individual. The staff member can then raise a safeguarding report if required.

Essential Contacts

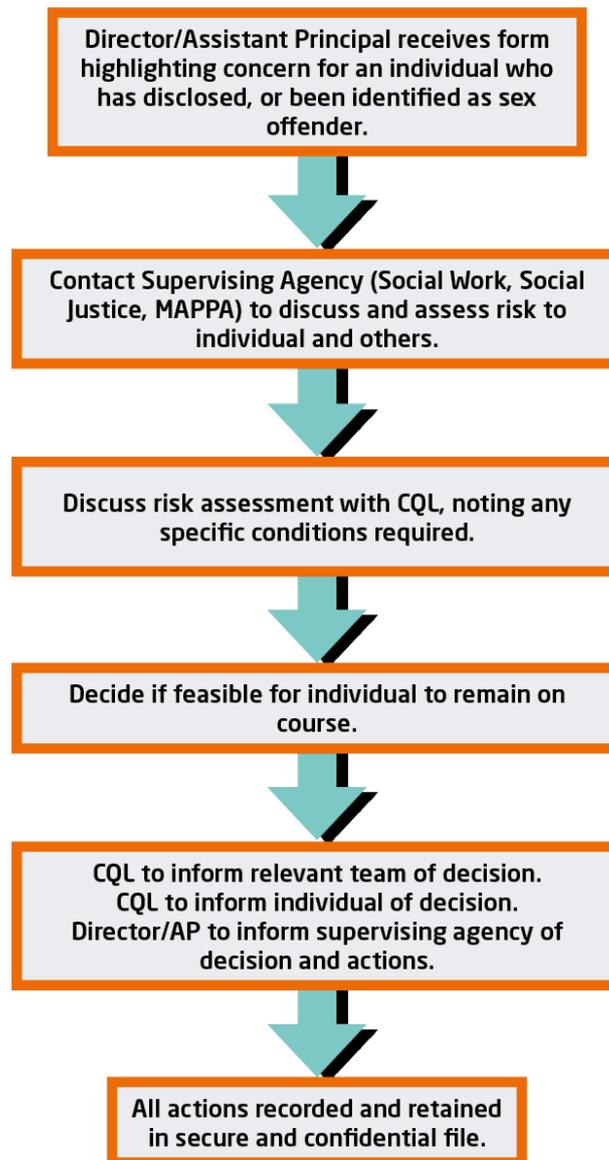
Paisley Lynsey Weir lynsey.weir@wcs.ac.uk 07980 695 956

Greenock Pauline Bonnar Pauline.bonnar@wcs.ac.uk 07815 692 598

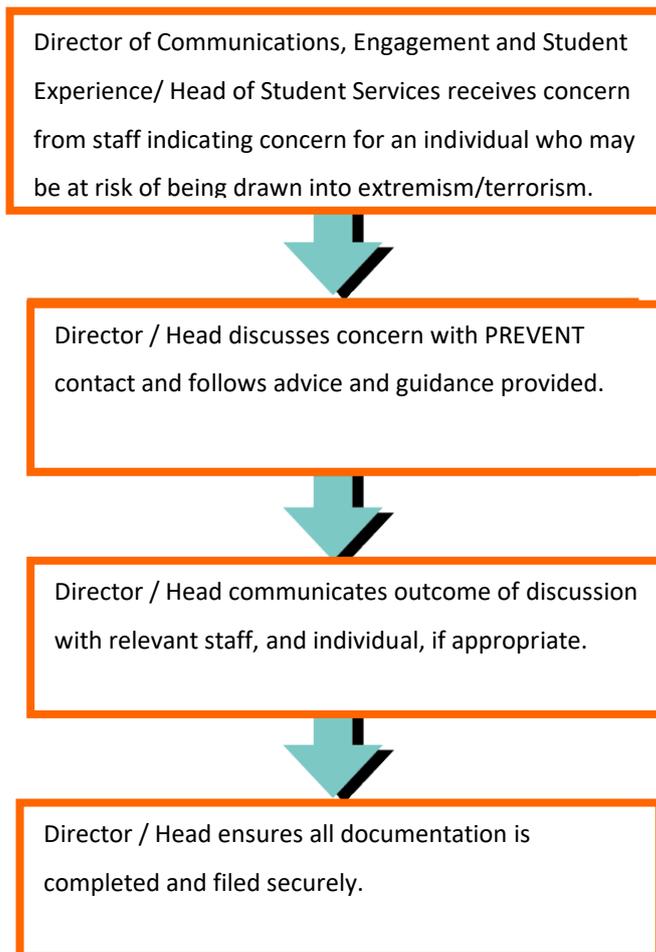
Clydebank Gail McLay gail.mclay@wcs.ac.uk 0300 600 6060

Wellbeing Mailbox wellbeing@wcs.ac.uk

APPENDIX E– Procedure for Management for Potential Sex Offender Concern



APPENDIX F – Procedure for Management for Prevent Concern



APPENDIX G - Child Protection in Specific Circumstances

definitions and descriptions (extracted from National Guidelines for Child Protection in Scotland 2014)

Domestic Abuse: describes any behaviour that involves exerting control over a partner or ex-partner's life choices and that undermines their personal autonomy. Children and young people living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm. Domestic abuse can profoundly disrupt a young person's environment, undermining their stability and damaging their physical, mental and emotional health.

Parental alcohol and drug misuse: Substance misuse can involve alcohol and/or drug misuse (including prescription as well as illegal drugs). Such misuse can result in sustained abuse, neglect, maltreatment, behavioural problems, social isolation and stigma.

Disability: this includes children and young people with a comprehensive range of physical, emotional, developmental, learning, communication and healthcare needs. Such young people are more vulnerable to abuse. Neglect is the most frequently reported form of abuse, followed by emotional abuse.

Non-engaging families: describes deliberate behaviour and attitudes designed to evade interventions aimed at protecting a child or young person. Is a clear and deliberate strategy adopted by one or more of the responsible adults caring for a child or young person. Can often result in violent and aggressive behaviour towards staff.

Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems:

increasingly, young people are experiencing health problems. While traumatic events will not usually lead to mental health problems, they may well trigger problems in those young people whose mental health is not robust. The incidence of self-harm and suicide among young people has increased in recent years. For some, mental health problems will severely limit their capacity to participate actively in everyday life and will continue to affect them into adulthood. Certain factors can increase the likelihood of mental health problems – e.g. living in poverty; having a learning disability; having educational difficulties; acting as a carer.

Children and young people affected by parental mental health problems: while it is not inevitable that living with parents/carers with mental health issues will have a detrimental impact on a young person's development, there is evidence to suggest that many families in this situation are more vulnerable. The needs of the parents/carers may conflict with the needs of the young person; the young person may take on caring responsibilities inappropriate for his/her age; may witness disturbing behaviour; may become the focus for aggressive behaviour, or rejection.

Children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviour: harmful or problematic sexual behaviour can be difficult to identify. The two key aims of addressing problem sexual behaviour are risk management, and risk reduction. Risk management covers actions taken to reduce opportunities for the problem sexual behaviour to occur. Risk reduction is a planned programme of work aimed at helping the young person develop appropriate skills to reduce their need to engage in harmful sexual behaviour. Where abuse of a young person is alleged to have been carried out by another young person, this should always be treated seriously.

Female genital mutilation (FGM): FGM is a culture-specific abusive practice affecting some African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities. It should always trigger child protection concerns. FGM includes all procedures which involve the total or partial removal of the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure is usually carried out on children between 4 and 10 years. Justification may include tradition; family honour; religion; increased male sexual pleasure; hygiene; fear of exclusion from communities. It is illegal to perform or arrange FGM in Scotland or abroad.

Honour-based violence and forced marriage: this is a spectrum of criminal conduct with threats and abuse at one end and honour killing at the other. Perpetrators may believe that a member of the family/community, who may be a young person, has shamed the family by breaking their honour code, and punishment may include assault; abduction; confinement; threats and murder. Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. An arranged marriage is one in which the families of both spouses are primarily responsible for choosing a marriage partner for

the relative, but the final decision lies with the potential spouses. Some indicators of these two situations extra-curricular activities; being withdrawn from education by parents/family.

Fabricated or induced illness: this is not a common form of child abuse and is most identified in younger children. There are three main ways of fabricating or inducing illness in a child – fabrication of signs and symptoms; falsification of charts and records, specimens, documentation; induction of illness. Most cases are confirmed in a hospital setting and may not necessarily result in physical harm.

Ritual abuse: this could be organised sexual, physical, psychological abuse, which can be systematic and sustained over a long period of time. The abuse may be underpinned by a belief system, and often involves more than one abuser. It usually starts in early childhood, and may occur within a family, community or within institutions. This form of abuse is profoundly traumatic for the children involved.

Abuse by organised networks or multiple abusers: this is complex situations usually involving several children being abused by the same abuser(s) and may involve family/community networks operating on/offline. This abuse may include abduction, prostitution and institutional abuse. Disclosure may come from adult survivors as allegations of organised abuse are often made historically.

Child trafficking: this involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring of children for purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes child labour; debt bondage; domestic servitude; begging; drug decoys; sexual abuse.

Historical allegations of abuse: this refers to allegations of neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse which took place before the victim was 16 (18 in particular circumstances) and which have been made after a significant time lapse.

Children who are looked after away from home: a looked after child may be placed with kinship carers, foster carers or in a residential setting. Looked after children in these

situations may exhibit complex emotions and challenging or irrational behaviour. Many will have experienced disruption in their early years and been emotionally and physically neglected or abused.

Online and mobile phone child safety: new technologies, digital media and the internet bring a variety of risks including exposure to obscene, violent or distressing material; cyber-bullying; identity theft and abuse of personal information; exploitation by online predators. In many cases, young people are targeted because they are already vulnerable.

Children and young people who place themselves at risk: some children and young people place themselves at risk of significant harm from their own behaviour. This could include self-harm; suicide attempts; alcohol/drug misuse; running away; inappropriate sexual behaviour; violent behaviour; criminal activity.

Children and young people who are missing: this can cover a range of circumstances. Children can be “missing” to statutory services where there is a loss of contact with the family/child. Children can be “missing” from home or care where the young person has run away or been forced to leave and their whereabouts are unknown. This could be due to parental abduction; stranger abduction; forced marriage; trafficked children; sexual exploitation; young people thrown out of the home or forced to leave.

Under-age sexual activity: increasing numbers of young people are engaging in a range of sexual activity before the age of 16. The engagement may be consensual or may arise from peer pressure or abuse/exploitation, therefore there needs to be a balance between assuring freedom to make choices and protection from harm. However, child protection measures must be instigated if the child is 12 or under; if the child is 13 or over, but the sexual activity took place when they were 12 or under; or where the other person is in a position of trust in relation to the young person.

Bullying: Bullying behaviour can leave a young person feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated and can have a devastating and lifelong impact. This can include teasing; threatening; ignoring; spreading rumours; physical assault; stealing/damaging

belongings; abusive texts, email or instant messages; targeting someone because of who they are or perceived to be. Bullying is increasingly associated with mobile technologies and social networking sites (cyber-bullying).

APPENDIX H - Approving Committee(s) Checklist

To be submitted to Senior Management Team and retained within the committee meeting records.

The approving committee has made the following checks prior to approval of the policy

Title: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The standardised template for presentation has been used	Yes
Appropriate consultation has taken place	Yes
Impact on other college policies and procedures has been considered and consulted upon where appropriate	Yes
Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out	Yes
Agree the date for review	Yes

An annual Safeguarding Report will be provided to both Senior Management Team and Learning & Teaching Quality Committee

The committee endorses the above policy and associated procedure(s).

APPENDIX I - PREVENT Duty – General Guidance Note for Staff

The following notes have been extracted from **Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland 2024** and should be read in conjunction with **Prevent Duty guidance: for further education institutions in Scotland**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities **to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism**

Specified authorities include Local Authorities; Independent and Grant-aided Schools; NHS in Scotland; Prisons; Police; Further Education; Higher Education.

In the context of the Act, **due regard** is taken to mean that specified authorities “should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions”.

The duty does not confer new functions on any specified authority.

A key element of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) is the **PREVENT Strategy**, published in 2011.

This strategy has 3 specific objectives:

- Respond to the **ideological challenge** of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- Prevent people from being **drawn into terrorism** and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support;
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are **risks of radicalisation** that we need to address.

PREVENT work depends on effective **partnerships**, and authorities should demonstrate engagement with multi-agency PREVENT and wider CONTEST groups and processes.

Effective delivery of PREVENT contributes to several of the Scottish Government’s national outcomes (successful learners; supportive communities; safe lives; inclusive national identity; high quality public services) and is also aligned to the Christie Commission report on the reform of public services.

In March 2015, parliament approved **guidance** (issued under Section 29 of the Act) for the specified authorities, which they must have regard to when **complying with the duty**. There

is a version of the guidance for authorities in England and Wales and another version for authorities in Scotland. This guidance was revised and re-released in May 2024.

The guidance comprises two main themes – effective **leadership** and working in **partnership**.

For all specified authorities, it is expected that leaders will:

- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build the capabilities to deal with it
- Communicate and promote the importance of the duty
- Ensure staff implement the duty effectively

It is also expected that specified authorities should be able to show how they link into the single national strategic lead for Prevent in their sector. They must demonstrate evidence of productive co-operation in local CONTEST and PREVENT delivery arrangements.

Frontline staff must understand what **radicalisation** means and why people may be vulnerable to it.

Staff need to know what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and need to understand how to **access support** for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

All specified authorities will need to ensure they provide appropriate **training for staff** involved in the implementation of this duty.

Specified authorities may need to **share information** and this must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Information-sharing is governed by legislation, and it is important that information-sharing agreements are in place at a local level, considering necessity and proportionality; consent; Data Protection Act; and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality. People suspected of being involved in **illegal terrorist-related activity** must always be referred to the police.

All specified authorities must **comply with this duty** and will be expected to maintain appropriate records to show compliance with their responsibilities and provide reports when requested.

Where a specified authority is not complying with the duty, the Prevent Oversight Board may recommend the Secretary of State use the power of direction under Section 30 of the Act.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of policy/procedure/decision: Safeguarding Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims of the policy/procedure/decision and main activities:

This Policy aims to ensure that West College Scotland meets its legislative and regulatory obligations in relation to the safeguarding of its students especially the children, young people and vulnerable adults within its student community. The policy will ensure that staff are made aware of their role in providing a duty of care to all students, including these vulnerable groups, and will ensure they are supported in this role by a designated safeguarding team and a set of procedures designed to enable effective implementation of protective practices.

Assessed By: Nathan Tyler

Date: 03 June 2025

This stage establishes whether a policy, procedure or decision will have a differential impact from an equality perspective on people who share protected characteristics or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

1. Who will benefit from this (students/staff/stakeholders)? Is there likely to be a positive impact on people who share protected characteristics, and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”? i.e. will not have a differential impact on any equality group/s?

This Policy aims to assist the College in ensuring the proper protection of students and stakeholders and should promote a positive, professional and caring ethos. This should result in a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of students at WCS and will also assist staff at WCS. There is relevant impact on some protected groups. For example, younger people should receive a specific benefit from the implementation of this Policy as they may be more vulnerable to suffering risk. Disabilities or long-term health conditions can result in vulnerability, for example, mental health conditions, and this Policy aims to mitigate risks for vulnerable people.

2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people who share protected characteristics? If so, who may be affected and why? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality “neutral”?

It is not anticipated that this will be the case and the implementation of this Policy has been developed with the aim of compliance with statutory regulations and creating equality for disadvantaged groups.

3. What action will you take to ensure that you are monitoring the impact of this Procedure?

We will monitor data about safeguarding concerns and any complaints made about the implementation of this Policy.