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# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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This policy is one of a series in the College's integrated safeguarding portfolio. The College's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted. The policy is available on the College website, included in the staff shared drive and hard copies are available in the staffroom. This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant College Policies and Procedures, particularly BCA Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy September 2021), BCA Safeguarding Audit (April 2021) and the Single Equality Scheme (November 2019).

## **Purpose**

***Providing high quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.***

## **BCA Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement**

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010. The college is fully committed to promoting, maintaining and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. The College aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, and gain a feeling of self-esteem and respect for and from others. The College expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination.

## **Policy Aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities;
- To ensure that BCA responds in a measured and supportive manner to reports or suspicions of abuse;
- To ensure consistent good practice;
- To demonstrate the college's commitment with regard to child protection to students, parents and other partners.

## **Child Protection Statement**

BCA recognises that it has a statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that students receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership. Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggest the need for interim review.

## **Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance:**

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Teacher Standards 2012
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges 2021

## **Policy Statement and Principles**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. Protecting them from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their mental and physical health or development. Ensuring that they can grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable them to have the best possible outcomes.

- Welfare of the student is paramount;
- All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. Safer students make more successful learners;
- All students, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm
- Students and staff involved in child protection and safeguarding issues will receive appropriate support and training;
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with students and their families have a role to play. In order to ensure the student and family receive the right level of support, at the right time, everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action;
- Representatives of the whole college community of students, parents, staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review;
- Providing high-quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection in the college. BCA's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Estella Roberts (Head of Welfare) who has the status and authority within the college to carry out the duties of the post, which include:

- Ensuring the child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff, reviewed annually and publically available
- Advising and supporting staff on child protection and safeguarding matters
- Encouraging a culture of listening to students
- Managing safeguarding referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies
- Taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- Making staff aware of local Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements
- Undergoing training and receiving regular updates to maintain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role, including Prevent awareness training.

### **SENIOR DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD/PRINCIPAL (SDSL)**

The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead/Principal is Anne Entwistle who is trained to the same level as the DSL. In the absence of the DSL, the senior DSL carries out those functions necessary to ensure

the ongoing safety and protection of the students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the senior DSL will assume all the duties above.

Other designated members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding issues are: Estella Roberts, Natasha Hall, Adam Robinson, Richard de Goede, Jan Dexter, Jack McDonagh and Kayleigh Brown.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Treating all students with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving students in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among students
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in students' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the college's child protection policy/keeping children safe in education, and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information-sharing
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse
- Referring all concerns about a student's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary directly to police or social care
- To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:
- Asking the student's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Referring concerns about a student's safety and welfare to the SDSL or DSL.
- Following the College's rules with regard to communication with students and use of social media and online networking.

The **Governing Body** ensures that the College

- Appoints a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL/Principal) for child protection who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training.
- Ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- Has a Child Protection Policy and procedures, including a staff Code of Conduct, that are consistent with the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the College's website or by other means.
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Principal;
- Follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with students.
- Develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Principal,

receive information about the College's safeguarding arrangements on induction and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership. The DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals.

- Ensures that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the College's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding.
- Ensures that the College contributes to inter agency working and plans.
- Considers how students may be taught about safeguarding, including e-safety as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Governing Body nominates a member to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Principal.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Child: A young person under the age of 18

Vulnerable Adult: 'A person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or another 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' - *Dept of Health ('No Secrets', drawn from the consultation white paper, 'Who Decides' - Lord Chancellor's Department 1997)*

Disclosure: A person states that they have been or are being abused by another

Allegation: A member of staff, governor, contractor or volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults is accused of committing abuse.

Abuse:

- A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person.
- May consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into financial or sexual transactions to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent.
- Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to or exploitation of the person subject to it. - *Dept of Health, 'No Secrets'*

### **Students Who May be Particularly Vulnerable**

Some students may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to students who are:

- Living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Living transient lifestyles
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion,

disability or sexuality

- Do not have English as a first language
- At risk of sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, county lines, peer on peer abuse, forced marriage or being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

### **Students With Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEND) or disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice based bullying);
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

### **Private Fostering Arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

See RBWM Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership guidance for further information.  
[www.wamlsccb.org/parents-and-families/private-fostering](http://www.wamlsccb.org/parents-and-families/private-fostering)

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a student may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the college should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

### **Children Looked After**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The college ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

### **Students Missing Education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, or mental health problems. The college will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions.

### **Abuse of Position of Trust**

All college staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the college staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence. The college's Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct/Ethical Practice sets out our expectations of staff.

### **Whistle Blowing if you Have Concerns About a Colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a student are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The college's whistleblowing code - this can be located in the staff handbook, enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Vice Principal. Complaints about the SLT/Principal should be reported to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor. Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

### **Allegations Against Staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, including sessional/supply teachers, our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021). Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the college, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

### **Staff CPD**

It is important that all staff receive CPD to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the college's child protection and safeguarding policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff, including the DSL, SDSL, Vice Principal/Principal and governors will receive CPD that is regularly updated. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings throughout the year along with mandatory annual safeguarding training for all staff.

### **Safer Recruitment**

Our college complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) and the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Partnership by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The college Staff Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full and can be found in the staff handbook/shared drive. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

The college obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the college have been appropriately checked. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the college or by the training provider, from whom written

confirmation will be obtained. The college maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the college, their contact with students and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

### **Contractors**

The college checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the college day.

### **Site Security**

Visitors to the college, including contractors, are asked to sign in, are given a badge and entered on our external visitors IT system which entails a photo ID, this confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply dropping off or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the college safeguarding and health and safety regulations. All staff will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site. We have Campus Wellbeing Officers that regularly patrols the campus and monitors CCTV.

### **Extended College and Off-Site Arrangements**

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where offsite college activities are provided by and managed by the college, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our college we will check that they have appropriate procedures and risk assessments in place. When our students attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and course related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

### **Staff/Student Online Relationships**

The college provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with students. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

### **Recognising abuse**

It is the responsibility of all staff, including volunteers to report concerns NOT to decide whether it is or it is not abuse. The need to protect the child or vulnerable adult is of paramount importance; even if you think a disclosure or allegation may be untrue you must still report it.

To ensure that our students are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitutes abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

### **Taking Action**

Any student, in any family in any college could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the student, if necessary call 999
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed

### **If You Are Concerned About a Student's Welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk. The student's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way. If the student does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff has concerns, they should **discuss their concerns with the DSL.**

### **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures which can be accessed BCA Bullying policy can be located in the on the shared drive in the staff handbook.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the college's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and should be clear about the college's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- Physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault
- Sharing nudes/semi nudes (sexting), including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- Teenage relationship abuse - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- Initiation/hazing - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or college groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- Prejudiced behaviour - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless,

worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. At our college, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Principal welcome talks are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- Tutorials are used to reinforce the message and give the student the opportunity to discuss any concerns in a confidential setting. Group seminars - current affairs and other suitable activities including role playing related to the coursework.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident, safe and at ease in college.
- We will ensure that the college is well supervised, especially in areas where students might be vulnerable. All allegations of peer on peer abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.
- **Information gathering** - students, staff and witnesses will be spoken to with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** - if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** - as with other concerns of abuse, the college will normally seek to discuss concerns about a student with parents. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the young person and so if the college believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the young person or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Where allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made, the college will act in accordance with the guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

***Further guidance can be found in KCSIE Sept. 2021 paragraph 46 to 50 & "Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021"***

### **Supporting those involved**

The support required for the student who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the student that harmed.

We will seek to understand why the student acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the student and/or change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

## **Online Safety**

As the students work regularly online/research tasks, it is essential that students are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

We have ensured that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to manage the content available to students, who can contact our students and the personal conduct of our students online.

## **Sharing nudes/semi nudes**

*The term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.*

*The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.*

*The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship.<sup>[footnote 4]</sup> It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:*

- *children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer*
- *children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online*
- *images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame*

*Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child or young person.*

*Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal which makes responding to incidents involving children and young people complex. There are also a range of risks which need careful management from those working in education settings. **'Sharing nudes and semi nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people. December 2020'***

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate staff. If appropriate, there will be subsequent interviews with the young people involved.

- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately in accordance with this policy.

In some instances, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the police. Once a report is made to the police, the report must be recorded and the police will investigate. This may include seizure of devices and interviews with the young people involved.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs

and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and college), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) Physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) Violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) Controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) Economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or obtain goods or services);
- and
- (e) Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

### ***National Domestic Abuse Line 0808 2000 247***

### **Honour-Based Abuse**

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth. FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so college staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female students about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female or male does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. College staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a student about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

### **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The Government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and colleges should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

BCA staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable students to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the college follows the DfE advice promoting fundamental British Values.

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

All staff at BCA are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a young person or vulnerable adult 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.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a young person or vulnerable adult that may also be a safeguarding concern, they should raise the issue by informing the DSL or SDSL.

*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:*

- *protecting children from maltreatment;*
- *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; and*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (KCSIE Sept 2021)*

### **WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT DISCLOSES TO YOU - See Flow Chart Appendix Two**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell;

they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a student talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the student know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the student this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the student staff will:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and not overreact
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- Not be afraid of silences
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the student’s mother think about it
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- Avoid admonishing the student for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ may be interpreted by the student to mean that they have done something wrong
- Tell the student what will happen next
- Report verbally to the DSL even if the student has promised to do it by themselves
- Write down notes as soon after the disclosure as possible and share with DSL
- Seek support if they feel distressed

### **Notifying Parents**

The college will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the student. Therefore, if the college believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the student or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

### **Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Vice Principal/Principal or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a ‘need-to-know’ basis.

Following a number of cases where senior leaders in schools and colleges had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) emphasises that any member of staff can contact children’s social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with our Retention and Destruction Policy.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- It is necessary and proportionate to do so; and
- the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

Welfare forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant staff Members. Child protection information will be stored separately from the students coursework file and the students ILP (Individual Learning Plan) will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the student and/or parents to share sensitive information within the college or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to their SLT link who will discuss it with the Principal.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent college staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a student.

The college's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to students and parent/guardians through the **BCA website - Parents/policies**

### **Referral to Children's or Adult Social Care**

The DSL will make a referral to children's or adult social care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The student (subject to their understanding) and the parents (where applicable) will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the student.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's or adult social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a student.

### **Reporting Directly to Child Protection Agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- The situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding lead, the Vice Principal and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the student's safety
- For any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the student.

### **Industry Placement**

The college has detailed procedures to safeguard students undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise students on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021).

### **Related Safeguarding Portfolio Policies**

This policy should be read alongside our other safeguarding policies, which are set out in Appendix Two.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Four Categories of Abuse**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or

- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Indicators of Abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been in-adequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons, it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

### **It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently absent from college, arrive late or leave the college for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their course work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

## APPENDIX TWO - Safeguarding Procedure

