



NOVA TRAINING COLLEGE
"Pointing to success"

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

We have a statutory and moral duty to ensure that it prioritises safeguarding and promotes the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults receiving education and training. The policy also forms part of our drive to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination.

Throughout this document, reference is made to 'young people and vulnerable adults'. The term 'young people' is used to mean those up to the age of 18. We recognise that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse. Accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

1.1 We are committed to ensuring that the organisation:

- Provides a safe environment for young people and vulnerable adults to learn in.
- Practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff (including agency staff), volunteers and contractors to work with or in an environment where young people and vulnerable adults are present.
- Identifies young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Takes appropriate action to see that such young people and vulnerable adults are always kept safe.
- Identifies young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering or likely to suffer impairment of their life chances and opportunities to learn and achieve.
- Takes appropriate action to ensure that such young people and vulnerable adults have access to all appropriate, available support to improve life chances.

1.2 In pursuit of these aims, we will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and the promotion of a safe environment for the young people and vulnerable adults learning.
- Aiding the identification of young people and vulnerable adults at risk of significant harm, from others or themselves, and providing procedures for reporting concerns.
- Aiding the identification of young people and vulnerable adults at risk of impairment of life chances, of learning and achieving.
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff.
- Ensuring the safe recruitment of staff.

1.3 In developing these policies and procedures, we will consult with, and take account of, guidance issued by the Department for Education, the Independent Safeguarding Authority and other relevant bodies and groups.

1.4 We will refer concerns that a young person or vulnerable adult might be **at immediate risk of or suffering significant harm**) to the appropriate agencies. The investigation of such concerns will be the responsibility of the appropriate external agency.

- 1.5 In the case of concerns that **life chances will be impaired without support services** we will work in partnership with other relevant agencies to investigate the concern, agree appropriate multi-agency actions to support the young person or vulnerable adult and provide support as appropriate.
- 1.6 There will be a senior member of the management team with lead responsibility for safeguarding issues, including those relating to staff. This will be the Head of Apprenticeship Delivery & Head of Teaching and Learning, who will be assisted by the Welfare and Support Officer.
- 1.7 The Welfare and Support Officer. Will ensure that the Head of Apprenticeship Delivery & Head of Teaching and Learning and all staff working with children will receive training adequate to familiarise them with safeguarding issues and responsibilities, and procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every three years.
- 1.8 In the operation of these procedures we will keep information confidential. However, in the interest of young people and vulnerable adults' well-being we will seek the consent of the young person or vulnerable adult or their parent/guardian to share information with relevant agencies where the Welfare and Support Officer has identified a need.
- 1.9 In the event of the possibility, or incidence, of significant harm to a young person or vulnerable adult consent will be sought where possible, but disclosure to appropriate agencies may be made irrespective of consent being given. Notes and internal case conference minutes will be held by the lead person in a separate confidential file and will not be kept in the tutorial file. A note saying that there has been a welfare concern will be lodged in the tutorial file, and the Welfare and Support Officer will be named as staff from whom more information can be obtained.

2. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

LEVEL OF CONCERN

2.1 Concerns about Immediate Risk of Abuse

Should a young person or vulnerable adult tell a member of staff or fellow student, or cause a member of staff or student to suspect that they are or may be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, the member of staff or student must:

- Note all relevant information as presented by the young person or vulnerable adult and/or the situation on a Referral and Information for suspected cases.
- Do not investigate the matter themselves.
- report the concern immediately to a member of the Senior Management team either in person
- The Welfare and Support Officer will assess the information presented and make a referral, as appropriate, to the relevant external agency.

Contact details for the designated safeguarding Officer and key external agencies will also be included in our Business Continuity Plan.

Should members of staff or fellow students believe that a vulnerable adult's or young person's life chances (in particular, chances of learning and achieving) will or may be impaired, they should refer the young person or vulnerable adult to his/her personal tutor.

In cases where the needs of the young person or vulnerable adult cannot be met through normal tutorial processes and approaches, the personal tutor, other members of staff or concerned students should refer the young person or vulnerable adult to the Student Welfare Officer.

2.2 REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

- The procedures apply to all staff, whether teaching, administrative, management or support, as well as to agency staff, contractors, and volunteers. The word '*staff*' is used for ease of description.
- In rare instances staff of education institutions have been found responsible for abuse. Because of their frequent contact with young people and vulnerable adults, staff may have allegations of abuse made against them. We recognise that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that they are thoroughly investigated and not subject to delay.
- We recognise that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the young person or vulnerable adult is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence, and career.
- Therefore, those dealing with such allegations will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.
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2.3 Receiving an Allegation from a Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

- A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member of staff from a young person or vulnerable adult should follow the guidelines for dealing with disclosure.
- The allegation should be reported immediately to the Head of Apprenticeship Delivery & Head of Teaching and Learning , unless the Head of Apprenticeship Delivery & Head of Teaching and Learning is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the Student Welfare Officer.
- Having gathered the facts, the Student Welfare Officer with lead responsibility should make an assessment of the allegation, consulting with the Head of Apprenticeship Delivery & Head of Teaching and Learning.
- Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the young person or vulnerable adult has experienced, is experiencing or is likely to experience significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies. The appropriate external agency will then be expected to conduct an investigation. It will be decided whether to recommend suspension to a senior manager, under the terms of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure. Suspension may be recommended in the following cases:
 - where a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk.
 - to alleviate stress on the member of staff concerned during investigation.
 - where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.

2.4 In all cases involving an investigation by an external agency, even when our Staff Disciplinary Procedure has been invoked, internal investigation procedures will be held in abeyance pending advice from the investigating agency that our procedures will not compromise the external investigation.

2.5 Where the allegation is NOT considered to warrant an immediate report to the appropriate agencies, an internal investigation under our Complaints Procedure should be undertaken. Several outcomes from this investigation are possible:

- The investigation concludes that although it is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the young person or vulnerable adult, the allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff. The matter should then be addressed in accordance with the Staff Disciplinary procedures.
- The investigation concludes that the allegation cannot be substantiated on the balance of probabilities and no malpractice can be apportioned to the member of staff. No formal disciplinary action should be taken. However, in some circumstances, it may be considered appropriate to hold a discussion with the member of staff to agree expectations of future conduct, offer advice and support for the member of staff.
- The investigation concludes that the allegation can be shown to be false. In these cases, when the allegation has been made by a young person or vulnerable adult the Student Discipline procedures may be invoked.

In cases of false allegations, the designated senior manager should also take the following actions:

- Inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made, orally and in writing, that no further disciplinary or safeguarding action will be taken. Consideration may be given to offering counselling/support to the member of staff.
- Inform the parents/carers of the alleged victim of the outcome of the investigation.
- Where the allegation was made by a young person or vulnerable adult other than the alleged victim, consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of that young person/vulnerable adult.
- Prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

2.6 A record of the allegation must be kept and, since false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere, consideration should be given to a referral to other agencies may act upon the information.

3. GUIDELINES

If a young person or vulnerable adult tells a member of staff about possible abuse, the member of staff should:

- listen carefully and stay calm.
- not interview the alleged victim, but question normally and without pressure, to be sure that the member of staff understands what the alleged victim is telling them.
- not put words into the alleged victim's mouth.
- reassure the alleged victim that, by telling the member of staff, they have done the right thing.
- inform the alleged victim that the information must be passed on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform the young person or vulnerable adult of to whom the matter will be reported.
- note the main points carefully.
- make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the alleged victim said, did and the questions asked by the member of staff, etc.

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the designated senior manager.

4. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse is likely to consist any of the following:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to the person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a young person's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of the young person or vulnerable adult's health or development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a young person or vulnerable adult being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the young person or vulnerable adult to be aware that the activity is sexual, and the apparent consent of the young person or vulnerable adult is irrelevant.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the young person's or vulnerable adult's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and/or harassment expressed verbally or through electronic media (SMS, social networking, texts, etc.) can be regarded as a form of abuse or may feature in any of the main forms of abuse outlined above. For further information and guidance on this area, refer to the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

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