POLICY ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

Version 2.1 (Updated May 2018)

1 Introduction

1.1 Pembroke College regularly invites children and young people to access its facilities and services for a wide variety of purposes. Examples include outreach activities, school visits, residential stays, hosting of work-experience placements and Open Days. There are also a small number of undergraduates who start studies at the beginning of an academic year who are under 18. This policy also extends to students who may work with children for specific reasons such as a research project or volunteering. Many of these activities, involving College members of staff working with children or young people, are away from parent/guardian and/or teacher supervision. The College aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children or adults at risk.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all agencies – whether they are public, private or voluntary – delivering services with public money to safeguard children.

1.2 This policy applies to all staff, students and volunteers who may be working with children (i.e. those aged under 16), young persons (i.e. those aged 16 to 18) and adults at risk whom the College encounters through its teaching and research activities as well as through its outreach programmes.

1.3 This policy does not seek to discourage such activities. Instead, this policy seeks to support these activities and to offer assurances to both staff, students volunteers and visitors that, through its implementation, the College seeks to protect children and adults at risk and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with College students and staff (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity).

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 The College wishes to ensure that it maintains the highest possible standards to meet its social, moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of all groups potentially at risk with whom the College's work brings it into contact, whilst recognising that it cannot act “in loco parentis”. Ultimate responsibility will continue to rest with parents and guardians.

2.2 While it is impossible to ensure that a child or adult in a vulnerable situation would never come to any harm, the adoption of this policy and associated guidelines aims to facilitate the management of the risk associated with the duty to protect such individuals.

2.3 The aim of this policy is to highlight the areas that form the basis of the College’s approach to safeguarding, the well-being of groups at risk and to set out a code of practice (see Appendices) for all staff, students and volunteers at the College who may work with them.

3 Risk assessment

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1 There is no legislation in the area of safeguarding that is directed specifically at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). However, some pieces of legislation and, in some circumstances, the common law, place responsibilities on organisations in general, including HEIs. The main legislation is the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which led to the introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority. It is for HEIs to make sure that they know about their legal responsibilities and how to comply with them, and to ensure that they are doing so.

2 As defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The terminology was changed from ‘vulnerable adults’ to ‘adults at risk’ in 2015.
3.1 All staff that intend to, or may be put in the position of, working with children or adults at risk, should ensure that they understand the implications of this policy before commencing any programme, event, visit or other activity.

3.2 An adult is in a vulnerable situation if they require an activity or service which leads to that adult being considered at risk at that particular time. See guidance at: http://osab.phewinternet.com/wp-content/uploads/Making-safeguarding-personal_a-toolkit-for-responses_4th-Edition-2015.pdf

3.3 A designated individual should complete a risk assessment before any new or changed programme, event, visit or any other activity involving groups at risk, or before admitting [or employing] an under-18.

3.4 All those involved in the risk assessment process should understand that the risk assessment is not only a way to mitigate or remove any potential risks but may also be a prompt to consider alternative working practices.

4 Recruitment, selection and employment procedures

4.1 The College will take all appropriate steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

4.2 Where the risk assessment has identified that students or staff are likely to have regular contact with or encounter members of groups at risk (which might include regular processing of information), rigorous checks into their eligibility will be required. Pembroke College has identified the following posts as having regular contact: Access Fellow and Access and Admissions Officer.

4.3 The College is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") and will ensure that any member of staff or any student who will have substantial one-to-one contact with children or adults at risk will be checked for relevant criminal convictions. The Access Fellow and Access and Admissions Officer fall into this category.

4.4 Further advice on employment can be obtained through the Home Bursar.

5 Dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse

5.1 Concerns for the safety and well-being of groups deemed at risk could arise in a variety of ways and in a range of different settings. For example, a child may report or display signs of abuse; someone may hint that a child is at risk or that a colleague is an abuser; an individual may witness or hear about abuse in another organisation. It is essential to act quickly and professionally in all cases of suspected abuse.

5.2 Any allegation by a child or adult in a vulnerable situation against a member of staff, another student or a volunteer should be reported immediately to the relevant designated individual who has responsibility under this policy. In dealing with any such allegation the College has a duty of care both to the child or adult in the vulnerable situation concerned and to the member of staff, student or volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

6 Responsibility

6.1 Guidelines will be issued to implement this policy and designated individuals will be appointed within each area to undertake risk assessments (Appendixes 1-4).

6.2 The Home Bursar’s office will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy. Members of the College are encouraged to discuss any concerns under this policy with the Home Bursar who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

6.3 The Academic Director will advise on the admission of under-18 students. The relevant Tutor, with advice from the Academic Director, will be made aware of students less than 18 years of age within their tutorial group. The Academic Registrar has responsibility for all students under 18 who are members of the College. This responsibility may be devolved as appropriate.

6.4 The Bursar’s Secretary will advise on the employment of under-18 members of staff and, in conjunction with the relevant Head of Department, will be responsible for monitoring their welfare. This responsibility may be devolved as appropriate.

6.5 Allegations or suspicions of abuse involving students should be reported to the Home Bursar. Allegations or
suspicions of abuse involving staff who are under 18 years of age should be reported to the Home Bursar.

7 Useful Links

- Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub
- For children: Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board: http://www.oscb.org.uk/
- For at risk adults: Oxfordshire Safe from Harm: http://www.safefromharm.org.uk
Appendix 1 - Guidance for staff working with students under the age of 18 years

All staff who have regular one-to-one contact with students who are under the age of 18 should adhere to the following guidance to ensure safety both for themselves and the young person.

If you have any concerns or queries arising from reading this guidance please contact the Home Bursar who is responsible for matters relating to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk or the Academic Registrar for any specific concerns about an individual child.

8 General Guidelines

- Respect all individuals whatever their age.
- Place the safety and wellbeing of the young person first. It must be placed before any personal or organisational goals and before loyalty to friends and colleagues.
- Form appropriate relationships with young people. These should be based on mutual trust and respect.
- Be aware of the relative powerlessness of young people compared to staff members.
- Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of children and young people.

9 Guidelines for working students under the age of 18 years

- Conduct meetings with the student either with another staff member present or in an open environment (e.g. leave the office door open and do not hold meetings when lone working).
- If staff have a concern about a student which specifically relates to the age of student under 18 years of age, they can contact the Academic Director/Registrar and/or refer to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Academic staff should follow guidance on signposting, consultation and referral to appropriate services if they have concerns about individual students.
- If physical contact is necessary, e.g. for demonstration purposes, ensure it takes place only with the full consent of the student and that its purpose is clear.
- Do not use touch as a form of communication, even to comfort a student who is distressed.
- Consider implications of transporting students in your own vehicle; offer alternatives when possible so the student travels with peers.
- Consider your expected behaviour in certain situations and what might be considered unacceptable, e.g. sexually suggestive comments, inappropriate language.
- Be mindful that it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18.
- Remember that it is illegal for students who are under 18 to buy alcohol, and that it would not be appropriate to offer them alcohol. Planning and organisation of events involving students should take this into account.
- Any reports or concerns should be recorded and reported using the Safeguarding Concern Form at Appendix 3 of this policy document.
Appendix 2 - Types of abuse or harm that may be experienced by a child or adult who is at risk

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to the abuse\(^3\).

The following list is an example of the types of abuse or harm children or adults may encounter (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Physical abuse or violence**, including hitting, shaking, throwing, slapping, pushing, kicking, poisoning or the giving or supply of illegal drugs, misuse of medication, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, restraint or otherwise causing physical harm, or inappropriate sanctions.

- **Sexual abuse**, including grooming\(^4\), rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the child or adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting; the activities may be physical or non-physical for example involving children or adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images.

- **Psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

- **Financial abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

- **Physical or emotional neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to protect a child or adult from physical or emotional danger or to ensure adequate supervision, failure to provide access to social care health, or educational services, the withholding of necessities such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, and benefits.

- **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, ageist abuse based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

- Negative or harmful experiences as research subjects.

- **Internet/electronic abuse**, the use of modern communication technologies (e.g. internet, text or video messaging, e-mail, chatrooms, social media networking sites) to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, intimidate or bully an individual in an attempt to gain power and control over them.

**It is important to note that abuse can:**

- Consist of a single act or repeated acts;

- Be intentional or unintentional or result from a lack of knowledge;

- Be an act of neglect, an omission or a failure to act;

- Cause harm temporarily or over a period of time;

- Occur in any relationship;

- Be perpetrated by anyone, individually or as part of a group or organisation;

- Often constitute a crime, i.e. physical, sexual abuse, e.g. downloading or using pornographic images of children and/or storing them on College computers or equipment.

\(^3\) Department of Health: No Secrets 2000: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect Vulnerable Adults from abuse

\(^4\) Grooming can occur when a child is drawn into a sexual relationship with an adult and the adult shrouds the relationship in secrecy
The following may indicate that abuse is taking place (this list is not exhaustive):

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries, particularly if such an injury is unlikely to have occurred accidentally;
- An injury for which the child, adult’s or carer’s explanation appears inconsistent;
- The child or adult describes an abusive act or situation;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour;
- The display of inappropriate behaviour (sexual or otherwise);
- Apparent mistrust of others;
- The child or adult appears increasingly unkempt.
# Appendix 3 - Safeguarding concern form (Personal and Confidential when completed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s Name :</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s DOB :</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Female :</td>
<td>Ethnic Origin :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time of concern :</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your account of the concern :
(what was said, observed, reported and by whom)

Additional information :
(your opinion, context of concern/disclosure)

Your response :
(what did you do/say following the concern)

Your name :

Your signature :

Your position in College :

Date and time of this recording :

**Completed form should be given to the Academic Director/Home Bursar immediately**

Action and response of Academic Director/Home Bursar (as appropriate)

Name: ...............................................................
Date:~~~~~~~~~~~~
Appendix 4 – Safeguarding – Dos and Don’ts

The following list of useful dos and don’ts is based on those included in the Safeguarding Children: Guidance for English Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (December 2007).

If a child or adult discloses that they are experiencing abuse or harm or if there are suspicions a child or adult is at risk of abuse or harm consider the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DO NOT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be supportive</td>
<td>Panic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take what the child or adult says seriously</td>
<td>Delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain calm</td>
<td>Promise to keep secrets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reassure them that it was right to tell someone</td>
<td>Ask leading questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use language they understand</td>
<td>Ask them to repeat the story unnecessarily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain what will happen next, i.e. that disclosure of relevant information may need to be made to the Designated Safeguarding Officer</td>
<td>Express any opinions about what you are told</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write down verbatim immediately afterwards what was said, including the time, place and any other observations; sign and date the record.</td>
<td>Discuss the disclosure with anyone other than the Designated Safeguarding Officer and other relevant personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass the report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.</td>
<td>Start to investigate Contact the alleged abuser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remember that you may need support. Seek advice and support for yourself from HR and/or the Wellbeing Service.</td>
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