

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

STUDENTS*
UNION

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS* UNION

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Policy and Procedure on Safeguarding

CONTENTS

1. The Union as an Organisation working with Children, Adults at Risk and Young People
2. Safeguarding Children – the Regulatory Framework
3. Purposes of this Policy and Procedure
4. The Union's Role
5. Responsibilities of all Staff and Volunteers
6. Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officers
7. Responsibilities of all Staff and Volunteers in relation to Concerns
8. Information Sharing Agreement in Safeguarding cases - University of Essex and the University of Essex Students' Union

Appendix

Record Form for raising a concern

1 - The Union as an Organisation working with Children, Adults at Risk and Young People

This policy and procedure applies to all activities of the Union or its subsidiaries, either involving or which may involve working with children and young people, up to the age of 18, and adults at risk. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Student volunteering activities organised or facilitated by the Union's V Team, including student-led projects and volunteer opportunities with external organisations
- Activities of Union Clubs and Societies
- The Union's community projects including Union staff or volunteers engaged in University projects

In this policy and procedure:

- 'relevant activities' includes all activities referred to above
- 'staff' means staff taking part in relevant activities on a paid basis, whether working for the Union or its subsidiary
- 'Volunteer' includes any student or staff member taking part in relevant activities on a voluntary basis
- 'Child' and 'Young Person' includes anyone up to the age of 18

Volunteer opportunities involving working with children and young people provided by external organisations will be subject to the safeguarding policies and procedures of the external organisation, unless it is agreed by the Union that this policy and procedure should apply. In all other cases, this policy and procedure will apply.

2 - Safeguarding Children – the Regulatory Framework

The Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Procedures, set out how agencies and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The SET are underpinned by Working Together to Safeguard Children – A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children which sets out what should happen in any local area when a child or young

person is believed to be in need of support.

Whilst the principal responsibilities for safeguarding children lie with agencies in the local safeguarding board, and in particular the local authority's children's social care services, the SET and *Working Together* set out the responsibilities of all groups working with children in ensuring children are safe and protected from avoidable harm.

This policy and procedure takes into account relevant provisions of the SET and *Working Together* and has been adopted by the Union's Board of Trustees in January 2019 which is responsible for its review as necessary at least every 3 years.

3 - Purposes of this Policy and Procedure

It should be noted that, as the SET make clear, **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

The purposes of this policy and procedure are to:

- Acknowledge the Union's responsibilities for any activities which may involve working with children or young people
 - Confirm the commitment of the Union to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people taking part in relevant activities
- Set out the responsibilities of staff and volunteers, working or volunteering in relevant activities

4- The Union's Responsibility

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Union, will ensure that suitable enhanced DBS disclosures are obtained for staff whose duties include regulated activities

External organisations offering volunteer opportunities involving working with children and young people will themselves arrange for suitable enhanced DBS disclosures to be obtained where necessary for volunteers prior to their taking up a volunteer role, unless it is agreed that the Union should do on their behalf. In all other cases, the Union will ensure that suitable enhanced DBS disclosures are obtained for volunteers working in relevant activities, prior to their undertaking their volunteer role, other than in relation to children, young people and adults at risk.

International students may not be in a position to apply for a DBS disclosure. In this case, their duties or volunteer role will not involve any unsupervised access to children or young people. We try to ensure that no student has unsupervised contact with beneficiaries.

If an individual declares or has been shown to have a conviction by way of a DBS check, then the SU will convene a Review panel consisting of Senior Staff and partners where relevant. For cases referred to the Review Panel, all decisions are taken on the basis of a risk assessment relating to the circumstances of the individual case

Staff and Volunteer Management

The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Union will ensure that staff and volunteers involved in relevant activities:

- Are familiar with this policy and procedure and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to it.
- Know how to recognise safeguarding issues, how to respond to it and how to report it, and;
- Will have access to training appropriate to their role and level of responsibility and receive appropriate management supervision.

Appointment of Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Union, has appointed Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) who are: Sian Lovesy and Fiona Harvey and the Union offers training to staff. Their roles are SU Advice Manager and Deputy Director, Activities and Support.

Risk Assessment

External organisations providing volunteer opportunities involving working with children and young people will themselves carry out risk assessments in relation to their activities, unless it is agreed by the Union that it will do so. In all other cases, the Union will ensure that all relevant activities are suitably assessed.

Working with External Organisations

Where the Union works jointly with an external organisation in providing volunteer activities involving working with children, young people and adults at risk the Union will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place relating to

respective responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk including relevant DBS disclosures and risk assessment.

Where external organisations working with children and young people are afforded access to the Union's premises and/or facilities, the Union will ensure that appropriate evidence is obtained relating to the fulfilment by the external organisation of its responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people, including DBS disclosures, and risk assessment.

Record Keeping

In relation to relevant activities, the Union will ensure that:

- Records are kept relating to working with children, young people and adults at risk including concerns raised, referrals made and any other work undertaken under safeguarding children and young people procedures; and
- Information relating the DBS disclosures obtained in relation to staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk will be managed and used in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and information will be stored securely.

Sharing Information

The Union recognises that sharing of information may be necessary in safeguarding.

The Union has an information Sharing Agreement in Safeguarding cases with the University of Essex, see end of document for full agreement.

5- Responsibilities of all Staff and Volunteers

In relation to relevant activities all staff and volunteers are required:

- To be familiar with this policy and procedure and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to it
- To know how to recognise safeguarding issues and concerns, how to report it and how to respond to it
- To undertake training on safeguarding children and young people and adults at risk appropriate to their role and their level of responsibility; and
- Comply in all respects with the provisions below on conduct and with any other requirements on conduct notified from time to time.

Further responsibilities of all staff and volunteers working with children and young people in relation to raising concerns are set out below.

6- Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer

In relation to relevant activities, the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) are responsible for:

- Providing guidance and support to other staff and to volunteers in relation to safeguarding matters, including raising concerns
- Dealing with concerns raised by other staff and by volunteers
- Deciding on appropriate courses of action in safeguarding matters, including making referrals in relation to concerns
- Acting as the point of contact between the Union and other agencies (particularly the University) and organisations in safeguarding matters
- Ensuring all appropriate records are kept in relation to working with children and young people, including concerns raised, referrals made and any other work undertaken under safeguarding children procedures; and
- Monitoring and reviewing the Union's safeguarding arrangements.
- Delivery of training to volunteers and other staff

Further responsibilities of the DSO in relation to referring concerns are set out below.

7 - Responsibilities of all Staff and Volunteers in relation to Concerns.

Any member of staff or any volunteer involved in relevant activities who has any concern that a child or young person is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected, is required to raise their concern with the DSO. Where the DSO has any such concern, they themselves are required to act as set out below.

Their concern may arise from an incident, from a disclosure by the child or young person, adult at risk or any other person, or from any other signs or indicators, for example, the behaviour of the child or young person, or another person.

If a child or young person is suffering from a serious injury, the staff member or volunteer is required to:-

- Take such steps as are practicable to ensure that the child or young person is in no immediate danger;
- Dial 999 for an ambulance if emergency medical treatment is needed; and
- Consider contacting the police if a crime has been or may have been committed.

If a concern arises from something a child, adult at risk or young person says, the member of staff or volunteer:-

- should listen carefully to what the child or young person says, to clarify the concerns;
- must not press the child or young person for information, lead or cross examine them;
- must explain to the child or young person that they cannot promise to keep anything secret or confidential;
- should offer reassurance about how the child or young person will be kept safe; and
- should explain what action will be taken
- should make notes of what is said, for clarity and to avoid repetition

The staff member or volunteer should stay as calm as possible and take care not to be judgemental or jump to conclusions.

The staff member or volunteer should not discuss their concern with any person who may have caused any harm to a child or young person, save to the extent necessary for the immediate welfare of the child or young person. They should not act upon it themselves and should report it immediately to a DSO.

The staff member or volunteer is required to make a written record of any incident or disclosure or any other signs or indicators giving rise to their concern as soon as practicable. A sample record form for such purposes is contained in Appendix 1. Such record should include:-

- the date and time of any incident, disclosure or noting of signs or indicators;
- details of the incident, disclosure or any other signs or indicators;
- exact details of anything said by the child or young person, and details of any injuries;
- if any staff member or volunteer witnessed an incident, details of what they saw; and
- the name and signature of the person making the record.

The record should be factual, but if it contains any statements of opinion they should be clearly identified as such. Information from another person should be clearly attributed to them.

Staff and volunteers are required to raise concerns with the DSO and ensure that any relevant written record is passed to them immediately as indicated in the record form. If a concern relates to the DSO, the member of staff or volunteer must raise the concern with the Students' Union Chief Executive and ensure the relevant record is passed to him. Relevant contact details are contained below.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer in relation a Concern
the DSO is responsible for referring a concern as described below, but anyone can refer if the child or young person is in immediate danger, or if the DSO has not taken action

Taking the appropriate course of action in relation to a concern

Once a concern is raised the DSO is required to act without delay. The DSO is similarly required to act without delay in relation to their own concerns.

In considering the appropriate course of action in relation to a concern, the DSO may need to consider the following, taking into account information sharing considerations:-

- making an immediate evaluation of the risk to the child or young person; taking reasonable and practical steps to safeguard the child or young person;
- referring to the police if a crime has been or may have been committed;
- if the matter is referred to the police, discussing risk management and any potential forensic considerations;
- arranging any necessary medical attention;
- making a referral to the relevant children's social care services, or the emergency duty team if out of hours;
- if a person causing the harm is also a child or young person, arrange for their needs to be attended to;
- making sure others are not at risk;
- taking appropriate action in relation to any member of staff or volunteer suspected of abusing any child or young person.

Deciding whether or not to make a referral

If the DSO is unsure whether or not to make a referral in relation to a concern, they should contact the relevant children's social care services, or the emergency duty team, if out of hours, for advice. For children this would be the Essex County Councils Family Operation Hub on 0345 603 7627

A referral **must** be made to the relevant children's social care services, or the emergency duty team, if out of hours, if there are signs that a child or young person is suffering significant harm through abuse and neglect or is likely to suffer significant harm in the future. A referral should be made if the abuse has been caused by a member of staff or a volunteer. In all cases, the timing of a referral should reflect the

level of perceived risk of harm, but should not be longer than one working day of identification or disclosure of the harm or risk of harm.

In all cases where a referral is made, the relevant children's social care services, or the emergency duty team, if out of hours, will give guidance on what steps are should be taken next.

Requirements on Staff and Volunteer Conduct

In all relevant activities all staff and volunteers:- Safeguarding Children – Policy & Procedure Approved by Union's Board of Trustees **11th May 2017**

- must not be involved in rough or over-physical activities with any child or young person and must avoid intrusive or inappropriate touching;
- must not use bad language and must not make any inappropriate comments or gestures to a child or young person;
- must not carry out any intimate personal care for a child or young person (for example, physical assistance in going to the toilet) or administer any medicine to them;
- must not take photographs or videos of a child or young person on any personal camera or mobile device*
- should take care not to put themselves in a position of risk, for example by being alone with a child, young person or a vulnerable adult unnecessarily;
- must not engage in any personal relationship with any child or young person taking part in relevant activities;
- must not have any contact with any child or young person outside relevant activities, including via mobile or email or through social media.
- must wear appropriate clothing, free from inappropriate slogans and logos.

*photographs and video recordings may only be taken on the Union's camera equipment, and only if expressly authorised by the member of staff or the external organisation responsible for the activity following receipt of the relevant photo consent form.

Further requirements on staff and volunteer conduct may be issued from time to time in relation to specific relevant activities.

8 - Information Sharing Agreement in Safeguarding cases - University of Essex and the University of Essex Students' Union

The safeguarding policies published by the University and the Students' Union outline legislative and statutory obligations, as well as internal requirements governed by the organisation's policies, guidance and codes of practice. Within these policies, the organisations will ensure that they take reasonable steps to:

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect;
- Safeguard those vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism;
- Ensure that relevant legislation and government guidance, and local guidelines and processes are followed. The University and the Students' Union recognise that appropriate sharing of information in relation to specific cases is intrinsic to safeguarding those most vulnerable. Consideration should be given to whether the sharing of information can support the duty of care and the organisation's safeguarding obligations.

Such considerations should include:

- Whether the information to be shared is necessary and proportionate;
- That the information is relevant, adequate and accurate, and shared in a timely manner – cases involving children and young people must be given priority and treated as a matter of urgency;
- That any information sharing, and associated record-keeping, is conducted securely and safely.

For the purposes of this agreement the University's Guidance for Responding to Concerns about a Missing Person is associated with the University's Policy on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk and therefore includes considerations around sharing information in these cases. A decision to share information should only be taken after discussion with one or more Safeguarding Officers or a relevant senior manager. If there is uncertainty surrounding the decision to share information initial reference should be made to the flowchart of when and how to share information. Accurate records must be kept of the justification of the decision to share. This agreement sits outside existing Confidentiality Policies associated with University and

Students' Union support services. Discussions relating to sharing of information must take these policies into account. Where a member of the University or the Students' Union believes that there is malpractice in relation to sharing of information in safeguarding context it is important that they have the opportunity to raise concerns or disclose information at a higher level. The organisations' whistleblowing policies are designed to enable individuals to do so and are separate to this Information Sharing Agreement.

APPENDIX

Record form for raising a concern

Copies of the record form for current use are available from the Unions' U Drive. Completed forms should be passed immediately as indicated on the form.

Union Activities involving Working with Children and Young People	
Safeguarding Record of Incident/Disclosure/other Signs or Indicators relating to Abuse or Neglect	
Activity Group/Area:	
Your Name:	Your Position:
Name of Child/Young Person:	Date of Birth of Child/Young Person (if known) or age:
	Gender:
Date, time (approximate) and location of any incident, Disclosure or Noting of other Signs or Indicators:	
Facts and Observations (continue overleaf and, if necessary, on a separate sheet):	
What was said by the Individual, by you, or by others relevant, using exact words	

where possible. Continue overleaf and, if necessary on a separate sheet.

Action taken so far

Signed:

Dated:

This form must be passed immediately to the Union's Designated Safeguarding Officers or, if your concern relates to them, to the Union Chief Executive.

**This section is to be completed by
the Union's Designated Safeguarding Officer / other reporting person**

Details of External Agencies Contacted

Police

Station and Officer

Yes/No	Contact No.	
	Date & Time	
	Advice received:	
Children's Care Services	Name and Position	
Yes/No	Contact No.	
	Date & Time	
	Advice received:	
Other	Name of Agency	
Yes/No	Name and position	
	Contact No.	
	Date & Time	
	Advice received:	
<i>Union's Designated Safeguarding Officer / other Reporting Person</i>		
Print Name		
Signature		
Date		

The incident/disclosure/other signs or indicators should not be discussed with anyone other than those who need to know about them in order to protect the child or young person concerned.

All personal data relating to safeguarding is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and covered under our Privacy Notices and the SU's Data protection and Retention Policy.

Relevant Contact Details September 2021

**The Union's
(as the designated safeguarding officers)**

Fiona Harvey, Deputy Director of Activities and Support

Sian Lovesy, SU Advice Manager

The Chief Executive: Craig Stephens

Independent advice is also available from the NSPCC

(National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

free 24 hour national Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

text: 88858 (free)

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

see also: www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline

NSPCC free 24 national helpline for children, Childline: 0800 1111

see also: www.childline.org.uk