

Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction and Principles

- 1.1. The College of Legal Practice ('the College') seeks to enhance the careers of legal professionals through the delivery of innovative, practice-focused legal education and training. In meeting this objective, the College actively partners with students, individually and collectively, to ensure and maintain the quality of their education experience and to enable them to achieve academic, professional and personal objectives.
 - 1.2. This document sets out the College's policy relating to children and adults at risk and seeks to ensure that individuals within these categories are safe and supported, while also protecting employees of the College from unfounded allegations of abuse.
 - 1.3. The College has a separate policy relating to its Prevent Duty and the steps it takes to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The College recognises that people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism can be wider than those considered vulnerable under the Care Act and the typical Safeguarding Duty. Anyone with any concerns about someone's vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation of any kind should make a referral to the College's Prevent Lead, under our Prevent Policy.
 - 1.4. The role of the Safeguarding Lead is:
 - 1.4.1. To have overall responsibility for implementation and promotion of this policy;
 - 1.4.2. To regularly update this policy to ensure it remains current and in line with best practice;
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- 1.4.3. To oversee the provision of staff information, training and guidance about the recognition of potential abuse and the appropriate responses;
 - 1.4.4. To oversee the management of Disclosure and Barring Services checks (where required);
 - 1.4.5. To oversee and appropriately record (in line with the Data Protection Policy) any safeguarding reports or responses; and
 - 1.4.6. To maintain adequate records of all allegations made under this policy.
- 1.5. The College will take all reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. In addition, the College aims to maintain the highest possible standards to meet its social and legal responsibilities.
 - 1.6. The College does not foresee an occasion where they will enrol a child on to one of its Programmes of Study. However, should this occur, in no circumstance is the College in a position to be in *loco parentis* and this responsibility will always remain with the child's parents.
 - 1.7. The College will carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks on staff and students who, by virtue of their role in the College or Programme of Study are known to be working directly with children or adults at risk in a regulated activity. The decision of whether a member of staff requires a DBS check resides wholly with the Chief Operations Officer.
 - 1.8. If there is an immediate risk of significant harm and emergency medical treatment is required 999 should be contacted urgently.
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Definitions

- 2.1 A 'child' is defined as an individual under the age of 18.
 - 2.2 An 'adult at risk' is an individual aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who are or may
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be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

- 2.3 A 'regulated activity' includes any activity which involves contact with under 18s or adults at risk and is of a specified nature (e.g. teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment, or transport), which takes place frequently (i.e. once a month or more often), intensively (i.e. taking place on more than two days in any 30-day period) and/or overnight.
- 2.4 The 'Disclosure and Barring Service' is a non-departmental, public body responsible for barring individuals and completing criminal records checks.
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Guidance for Staff

- 3.1 In pursuit of best practice, safeguarding overrides data protection, confidentiality, and internal structures.
- 3.2 Where a disclosure is made that concerns a child protection issue or an adult at risk, the member of staff is obliged to report the matter to the College's Safeguarding Lead in accordance with statutory requirements and cannot keep the matter confidential. A member of staff who receives a disclosure has a responsibility to inform the College's Safeguarding Lead rather than investigate the matter.
- 3.3 Unless a pre-existing relationship was in existence, staff members are expected to keep a professional distance from students. This includes ensuring a clear separation between their private social lives and those of students (this includes through private social media platforms and ensuring that students are not provided with the personal contact details of a member of staff).
- 3.4 Where a member of staff is involved in a regulated activity requiring a DBS check, they are obliged to notify the College of any subsequent criminal convictions that may impact upon their future employment or engagement with that regulated activity.
- 3.5 Care should be exercised in the use of language. For example, unnecessary comments which have or could be
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interpreted as having an inappropriate sexual connotation should be avoided.

- 3.6 One-to-one meetings with students under the age of 18 or adults at risk should be conducted with appropriate regard to the potential sensitivity of the situation.
- 3.7 Where a child or adult at risk discloses a matter to a member of staff, that member of staff is required to follow the guidelines which appear in Appendix 1 of this document.
- 3.8 The College will ensure a copy of this policy and procedure is included within the induction for all new staff. The College's Safeguarding Lead can be contacted, in confidence, should members of staff have any queries or require guidance about this policy.

Guidance for Students

- 4.1 Students are reminded about their obligations which appear under the [Student Contract](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).
- 4.2 The College seeks to secure best practice in safeguarding matters and where a student is concerned about a child protection issue or an adult at risk, the student is encouraged to report the matter to the College's Safeguarding Lead.
- 4.3 The College's Safeguarding Lead can be contacted, in confidence, should students have any queries about this policy.

Review Process

- 5.1 A statement of which staff and student roles require vetting and barring checks shall be maintained by the College. Where vetting and barring checks are identified as necessary and the DBS Information raises concerns about the suitability, the Safeguarding Officer will assess the suitability of the appointment.
 - 5.2 The Chief Operations Director is responsible for ensuring that safe recruitment procedures are followed.
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- 5.3 The College undertakes enhanced DBS checks (see Safeguarding Policy) on all new members of staff, who are identified as undertaking Regulated Activity, which are re-submitted for relevant staff every three years. Under no circumstances will any staff member be left unsupervised with the children or vulnerable adults until the report has been returned from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
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Placements and Visits

- 6.1 Where a programme of study includes placement activities, the College will ensure that placement providers are notified of any students aged under 18 or who are classified as adults at risk and that the placement provider understands and accepts that the policies and procedures of the placement provider will apply while the student is under the jurisdiction of the placement provider.
- 6.2 As such, if a student has safeguarding concerns while on placement, they should immediately report these to the Safeguarding Lead of the setting and to the College's Safeguarding Lead.
- 6.3 Where a programme of study includes a visit, an appropriate risk assessment will be completed prior to the date of the activity.
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Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The College has designated the following roles for coordinating the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures including ensuring that staff and relevant students understand their role and limitations.
- 7.2 The nominated Safeguarding Lead is the current Chief Operations Director, Peter Liver, who is responsible for the College's strategy on Safeguarding and oversight of the Policy and is accountable for the College's safeguarding practice.
- 7.3 The Safeguarding Lead is expected to:
- Manage and escalate referrals
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- Refer cases of suspected abuse to other agencies and/or the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer, where required
 - Support staff who make referrals to the local authority;
 - Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/ harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
 - Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

7.4 The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead is to ensure that:

- A structure is in place to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.
 - Safeguarding is prioritised at the most senior level within the institution.
 - Develop and implement procedures, practice and guidance for safeguarding that address the areas of risk and are fit for purpose, including managing breach of safeguarding allegations against students and staff; whistle-blowing and safe recruitment practices.
 - Identify safeguarding training requirements and oversight of training delivery.
 - Have a working knowledge of how local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) operate, the conduct of a Child in Need of Protection Case Conference and/or Strategy meeting and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
 - Secure records concerning safeguarding are stored and shared appropriately.
 - Monitoring review systems are in place to incorporate new guidance and legislation into College policy and to test out existing systems.
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Appendix 1: Guidance to staff in the event of a disclosure

1. Understanding, recognising and responding to abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or an adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may occur in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. The College adopts the widest possible definition of abuse to cover *inter alia* physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory and institutional abuse as well as preventing radicalisation.

2. How to respond when someone wants to talk about harm or abuse

In the event that a student confides an allegation of abuse, some general points in terms of response include to:

- Listen
- Avoid questions
- Avoid passing judgement on what you are told
- Never promise confidentiality
- Explain what you intend to do and do not delay in taking action
- Write down what is said
- Contact the College's Safeguarding Lead

Your responsibility as a member of staff is to 'inform' rather than 'investigate'.

3. What to do when a child or adult at risk talks about harm or abuse

You need to make a careful written record of what has been observed as follows:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the conversation);
- Write down exactly what the child or adult at risk has said and when they said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g., a description of the activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed up. These notes will need to be passed on to the College's Safeguarding Lead.

4. Recognising potential abuse or neglect

There may be occasions where an individual does not disclose abuse. However, there are a number of ways in which abuse of a child or adults at risk can become apparent:

- A child or adult at risk discloses abuse or neglect.
- third party discloses that a child or adult at risk has told him or her that abuse or neglect is taking place.
- A child or adult at risk shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child or adult at risk's behaviour leads to suspicion that they are being, or has been, abused or neglected.
- A member of staff's behaviour in the way in which they relate to a child or adult at risk causes concern.

Where any of the above causes suspicion, then the member of staff should speak to the College's Safeguarding Lead of their concerns.

It is important to stress that in each of the above there may be an innocent explanation and this should not lead to a context of suspicion, rather simply awareness raising and ensuring that the College remains a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all.