

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

1. Introduction

The University of Reading makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. It is committed to safeguarding children and Adults at Risk in so far as they are engaged in University-related activities and services.

Who the policy applies to

This policy applies to all employees, students (including apprentices), officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers, agency workers and chaplains/faith representatives who are engaged in the work of the University. It will support and give guidance to staff in their practices and clarify the University's expectations.

What activities the policy applies to

The University encounters children and/or Adults at Risk through a range of activities such as outreach activities, residential stays, Open Days, staff and student research activity, daily student contact and through registrations with the Student Wellbeing Services. There are a very small number of students who are under the age of 18 when they commence their studies. Some areas of the University have a very specific connection with children and/or Adults at Risk as a result of the nature of their discipline, teaching or research. This includes the Schools that teach programmes that involve students working with children and Adults at Risk.

The policy is intended to be an overarching framework which seeks to ensure that the University undertakes its statutory responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and Adults at Risk and the safeguarding of its members, and that it responds to concerns appropriately. There are, in addition, local policies such as those of individual Schools who, as a result of the nature of their discipline, teaching and/or research work with children and Adults at Risk, research or clinical groups and the Counselling & Wellbeing Service. Such local policies will align with the principles and approach of this policy and/or the relevant professional body or other regulatory authority requirements (e.g. the NHS, the Department for Education, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy).

What activities the policy does not apply to

The University cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people under the age of 18 who are present on University premises without its knowledge or consent. Therefore, parents, guardians, schools or groups who bring their children onto the University campus must take responsibility for their safety and welfare. This policy does not apply to tenants occupying property owned by the University, on or off campus. Neither does it apply to situations where a third party hires a University venue.

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3. Key principles

The University of Reading recognises that it has obligations to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of children and Adults at Risk involved in University activities.

The University policies and procedures observe the relevant statutory duties and guidance documents and are informed by good practice across the higher education sector. The University seeks to follow best practice by putting reasonable structures in place to support safeguarding and takes all concerns seriously, responding to concerns promptly and referring to the local authority and/or police as appropriate.

Anyone may witness or become aware of information suggesting that abuse or neglect is or is at risk of occurring and it must not be assumed that someone else will report the

information. If a child or Adult at Risk discloses abuse or neglect directly to a member of staff this should always be taken seriously.

It is not everyone's responsibility to investigate concerns but it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns appropriately and for the appropriate authority to be notified through the Designated Safeguarding leads. Early sharing of information is key to providing an effective response to concerns.

4. Policy aims

The content of this policy reflects the relevant legislation, statutory duties and legal obligations of the University. It is one component of the University's overall approach to welfare and wellbeing. The University provides holistic student support that prioritises wellbeing and success through a range of academic and student support services. The University also provides appropriate wellbeing support to employees.

The aims of the policy are to:

- Protect the rights of every child and Adult at Risk within a safe environment.
- Promote staff awareness of the need to safeguard **this** identified group and to recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Identify the specific responsibilities of staff in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure that effective and proportionate safeguarding practices and procedures are in place.
- Ensure that staff act professionally, sensitively and in ways that promote the welfare of this identified group.
- Mitigate the risk of abuse by ensuring procedures and standards are in place, reviewed regularly and communicated to staff.

5. Definitions

The University recognises the definitions set out by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and the Care Act 2014.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and the protection from harm. Safeguarding in the context of UoR also refers more broadly to the concerns about the wellbeing of students, staff and visitors.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse includes acts or risks of harm, oppression, discrimination, exploitation, and manipulation of power. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse and neglect may not always be intentional but always requires a response. Children and Adults at Risk may be perpetrators as well as victims of abuse and neglect. There may be additional factors to consider if a person has [protected characteristics](#).

Abuse and neglect are not restricted to any particular group in society and can take a number of forms, including the physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, bullying, harassment (including cyber-bullying), discrimination, modern slavery,

domestic abuse, risk to self and/or others, honour-based abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, neglect, financial/material abuse and cultural abuse.

Child (or Children)

A child is a person under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk

The University defines an Adult at Risk as someone over 18 years of age who (i) has needs for care and support; and (ii) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and (iii) as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This definition comes from the Care Act 2014, but for the avoidance of doubt, the University is not subject to the provisions of this act, beyond the safeguarding provisions set out in this policy.

Staff

The term 'staff' is used throughout this policy to refer to both employees of the University and those who work (paid or unpaid) on behalf of the university, including Chaplains/Faith Leaders and volunteers.

6. Responsibilities

All members of the University community have a responsibility to promote good practice by following the guidance laid out in this policy, to pass on any concerns of abuse or risks of abuse promptly using the required procedures and to contribute to discussions about safeguarding, being mindful of circumstances that may lead to themselves or others being made vulnerable and positively involving people in developing safe practices.

Additional specific responsibilities:

1. **The University Executive Board** is responsible for ensuring that:
 - there is commitment across the University to safeguarding;
 - there are appropriate resources committed to safeguarding;
 - the lines of responsibility in respect of safeguarding are clear; and
 - all reasonable efforts are made to highlight safeguarding measures to staff and students.
2. **The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead** is the University Secretary, who has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, including the matters below, has been delegated to the Director of Student Services, who will:
 - take responsibility for the monitor and review of policy;
 - have oversight and management of the Designated Safeguarding Leads;
 - ensure that staff have access to appropriate training/information, including liaison with Research Services concerning training for the research context.
 - ensure safeguarding systems are robust and concerns are managed swiftly and appropriately and where necessary cases are referred to social services and/or the police;
 - ensure that accurate written records of referrals/concerns are stored securely and shared appropriately (where concerns have not required referral to social services or the police, a record should still be retained)

- keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.
3. **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)** will be identified within the University and will be appropriately trained in safeguarding issues.

The DSLs are:

- The Director of Student Wellbeing Services
- Head of Counselling
- The Student Welfare Team Manager
- Residential Support and Discipline Manager

Their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are:

- To undertake an investigation into safeguarding concerns when raised, whether concerning a student or a third party (e.g., encountered within a research context or student placement).
 - To make decisions on Safeguarding reporting (always with two DSLs or a DSL and the Director of Student Services).
 - To ensure the appropriate referral of children who may be at risk of significant harm to Children's Social Care services and/or the police.
 - To ensure the appropriate referral of an Adult at Risk who is or may be suffering serious harm to Adult Social Care Services and/or the police.
 - Where the Adult at Risk is a member of staff to refer the concern to HR and support subsequent action (reporting/referral where appropriate).
 - To be able to provide advice and support to staff on issues relating children and Adults at Risk protection.
 - To support the individual and ensure they are central to the process and kept informed throughout.
 - To respond to individual cases, including attending multi-disciplinary conferences as appropriate.
 - To maintain proper records of referrals, complaints or concerns.
 - To ensure recording is properly stored and archived.
 - To give feedback to the member of staff/liase as appropriate taking information sharing and confidentiality issues into account.
 - To undergo available safeguarding training and undertake refresher training as appropriate.
 - To provide information and advice within the University on safeguarding issues.
4. **Safeguarding Co-ordinators (SC's)** will be identified within the University and will be appropriately trained in safeguarding issues.

The SC's are:

- School Directors of Academic Tutoring (SDAT's)
- Support Centre Managers (for Schools other than Henley Business School)
- Head of Programme administration (for Henley Business School)
- Student Welfare Officer Lead (for International Study and Language Institute)
- Wardens (for halls of residence)
- Student Financial Support and Helpdesk Manager (in all other instances)
- Apprenticeship Compliance Manager (for HBS apprenticeship provision only)
- Outreach and Access Manager (Global Recruitment (UK & Outreach)

Their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are:

- To act as an initial source of support, advice and guidance to students and staff;
 - To refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This includes concerns that may arise in all spheres of University work including within a research context;
 - To follow up and liaise with DSLs to ensure satisfactory outcomes;
 - To liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads regarding any ongoing investigations where necessary;
 - To ensure that staff within their School or service areas are aware of and adhere to the policy and procedures set out in this guidance; and
 - To identify any additional safeguarding guidance or measures are necessary within the specific School context due to the nature of discipline, curriculum, research or other activities.
5. **Head of Admissions** is responsible for decisions on admittance and any relevant special measures that the University may take when admitting under 18s into University accommodation.
6. **Head of Global Recruitment (UK and Outreach)** is responsible for providing advice on any risk assessment process for activities focused on students under 18 or Adults at Risk on campus.
7. **Director of Human Resources** is responsible for:
- The University's DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) processes
 - the management of concern raised about an Adult at Risk who is a member of staff and who is or may be suffering serious harm including:
 - To undertake an investigation into safeguarding concerns when raised
 - To liaise with the Safeguarding Leads concerning referral of an Adult at Risk to Adult Social Care Services and/or the police
8. **Director of Research Services** is responsible for the provision of safeguarding training appropriate for the research context.
9. **Head of School** is responsible for ensuring the existence and effective operation of any local safeguarding policies needed for activity in their School where it is not adequately covered by this policy. In particular they are responsible for:
- ensuring an appropriate alignment with the University policy and/or the relevant professional body or other regulatory authority requirements.
10. **Organisers of University activity (on or off campus) that purposefully engages with children or Adults at Risk** are responsible for:
- Undertaking and seeking approval for an appropriate risk assessment
 - Understanding this policy and the procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns
 - Ensuring that all staff and/or student participants understanding this policy and know what they should do to report a concern at any time during the activity

Where the activity is hosted by another organisation within their own facilities, the host organisation's Safeguarding Policy will normally take precedence.

Safer Recruitment

The University of Reading ensures safer recruitment of staff (including those involved in volunteering/community-based activities) to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and Adults at Risk. This includes the commitment of resources to undertaking Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks or relevant equivalent investigations where staff have lived or worked overseas where necessary. Recruitment processes include identity checks, collecting acceptable references and good practice questions in interviews.

Where a staff role has been identified (permanent or temporary) as requiring a DBS check, **Human Resources** is responsible for communicating with the relevant staff member, and for ensuring that DBS checks are carried out and renewed at the correct interval. Where a DBS check reveals information that requires consideration or action they will liaise with the relevant line manager of the staff member and the Head of School or Function to take any necessary actions.

For further information, see the University's DBS policy and/or the Home Office DBS [website](#)

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be undertaken for organised activities which involve bringing children and/or Adults at Risk on to campus, by responsible managers. The normal Health & Safety risk assessment and details of the event must be approved by the Estates and Facilities department and Head of Department prior to any event taking place. Where children or Adults at Risk are likely to be involved the risk assessment should be extended to cover safeguarding and approved by the relevant local Safeguarding Co-ordinator (with support from a DSL if needed).

Risk assessments should also be carried out by responsible managers where staff or students purposefully engage with children or Adults at Risk off campus (e.g. in local Schools) in the course of their employment or study. These should be approved the local safeguarding co-ordinator, Head of School or other specific designated role within the local context.

Risk Assessments should include: a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and especially vulnerable groups, and an assessment on how risks can be mitigated or avoided where practicable to prevent harm. Careful consideration should be given to activity where staff members will have one-to-one access to people, and especially vulnerable groups, and where any University activity is delivered off-campus. The nature, length and intensity of contact with a child/Adult at Risk should be considered to help identify the context within which the risks should be managed.

Activities where a Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check is required should be identified. This would apply to staff or students where their normal duties fall within the definition of Regulated Activity or are listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended) or the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Registration) Regulations 2006. Decisions in relation to who should be subject to a DBS check should be in line with the University's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy.

Student placements

Where students undertake placements involving children and/or Adults at Risk appropriate training is provided either by the School and/or the placement provider. DBS checks are

carried out where required and students are advised to raise any concerns through their placement provider's safeguarding mechanisms.

Students who are studying abroad are advised to follow their host institutions guidance for safeguarding concerns but if the concern is about a University of Reading student they should follow this policy.

7. Training

All staff regardless of role will be made aware of, and be familiar with, this policy through the Staff Induction process.

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and/or Adults at Risk will have access to safeguarding training and information at an appropriate level and be aware of child protection issues and the procedures in place to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of abuse. The Safeguarding [essentials](#) training module is accessible to any staff member via UoRLearn.

Staff with particular responsibilities, such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Co-ordinators will be required to undertake appropriate training to fulfil the requirements of the role. Safeguarding Co-ordinators should undertake the Safeguarding Essentials training module (or equivalent) accessible via UoRLearn. Designated Safeguarding Leads should undertake level 3 safeguarding training which should be refreshed at three-year intervals.

All staff who undertake safeguarding training must ensure that there is a record that the training has taken place. Where training is undertaken via UoRLearn this is automatically recorded and stored. However, staff taking training taken outside the University should store and maintain their training records whilst they are employed by the University.

8. Managing information

The University will ensure that any information that relates to safeguarding is recognised as confidential, recorded and stored securely and in accordance with the University's policies on Data Protection and Confidentiality. However, it should be noted that the law permits disclosure of the confidential information necessary to safeguard the interests of children and Adults at Risk.

Staff (and others who are necessarily privy to such information) will, therefore, ensure that information relating to actual, suspected or alleged abuse of children and Adults at Risk is treated with the utmost care and that no one is given more information than is necessary to protect the child/Adult at Risk concerned. The Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director of Student Wellbeing) will determine what information can be shared and to whom.

9. Allegation management process

The University has a procedure in place for dealing with allegations against staff, students who work or otherwise come into contact with children and/or Adults at Risk. This is set out below. The procedure has been designed to ensure the protection of a child or Adult at Risk from abuse whilst recognising the need to protect staff and students from unsupported or false allegations.

If anyone (staff, students or member of the public) has concerns over a child/ Adult at Risk or a child/ Adult at Risk confides in a member of staff in relation to another member of staffs or student's actions they should:

A. Where the person of concern is a student :

Immediately discuss their concerns with their local¹ Safeguarding Co-ordinator; who will then:

- o Report this immediately (via the Notification of Concern process) to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). The DSL will obtain any notes of the allegation from the member of staff or student. then the DSL will make a record of the incident on the University's Student Case Management system
- o Where the allegation is against a member of staff , the Head of School/Function and HR must be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- o The DSL will report this allegation if it is found to meet the Safeguarding criteria and provide information to the Director of Student Services as needed and update regularly.
- o The DSL will, where appropriate, notify the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day of the allegation being made.
- o The DSL will coordinate support for the student, through the Welfare team or appropriate function.

Notification to carers/guardians/parents of the person that the allegation involves will be undertaken in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.

B. Where the person of concern is neither a student nor a member of staff (e.g. the child/sibling/partner of a student, a child or Adult at Risk encountered during research they should follow the same process used for students. The DSL will tailor the response as necessary. Where the concern is raised in the context of working in/with another organisation, e.g. in a local school, the concern should be raised through their safeguarding mechanisms.

C: Where the person of concern is a member of staff the Head of School/Function and HR should be informed

D: Where the person of concern is a volunteer or working for the university in another capacity they should follow the same process used for staff. The Director of HR and Head of School/Function will tailor their response as necessary.

An appropriate investigation will be carried out in accordance with the University's HR disciplinary procedure for staff or the University's Student Discipline and/or Fitness to Practice procedure for students². The investigation may lead to a referral of the case to the police or other services and other action as appropriate.

¹ Where an individual has a concern but is unsure who their local safeguarding co-ordinator would be (e.g. volunteers, contractors etc.) they should contact the Student Financial Support and Helpdesk Manager based in the Carrington Building.

² Where a student is on placement at UoR they will still be considered as a student and the Student Disciplinary processes will apply. If the allegation is against a student on placement with another organisation they will still be considered as a student and the Student Disciplinary processes will apply.

The individual staff member, against whom the claim has been made, will be able to access support from HR, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health as appropriate. Where the allegation is against a student they have access to support provided via the Student Welfare Team and the Reading Students' Union Advice Service.

Concerns that staff or students may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism should be raised under the Prevent Policy Statement (<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff/values-and-behaviours/prevent-policy.aspx>). Concerns should be raised by emailing prevent@reading.ac.uk. If there is an immediate safety concern this should be raised with the Security Services Manager (or, in their absence, the Director of Campus Services).

Guidance to staff and anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse

When dealing directly with a child/ Adult at Risk disclosing abuse you should:

- stay calm and listen to the individual's concerns;
- treat the person with respect and provide reassurance that it is safe to have the discussion;
- allow the individual to speak without disruption;
- keep a record of the concern using the person's own words as far as possible;
- do not promise confidentiality;
- explain to the individual that the information may need to be passed on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead; and
- pass on the information promptly and directly to a Designated Safeguarding Lead

Things not to do:

- dismiss the concern or think it is someone else's responsibility;
- ask leading questions when the person is disclosing to you;
- express shock or anger or laugh;
- tell the person that you will keep the information confidential;
- delay reporting the suspected or confirmed abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; or
- carry out an investigation into the allegation.

10. Staff conduct and good practice

Any University staff, others acting on behalf of the University or students working with children and/or Adults at Risk whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity will be expected to:

1. Act responsibly and always maintain a professional manner, ensuring that behaviour, language, gestures, and dress code are appropriate.
2. Maintain professional boundaries at all times. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and students under the age of 18 or who are considered vulnerable/at risk is an abuse of trust which may constitute a criminal offence. Staff and student relationships are discouraged under the University's Staff and Student Relationships policy. Staff should speak to their Head of School or Function or their HR Partner for further advice.
3. Avoid physical contact. Staff, others acting on behalf of the University and students should be aware of personal space and should avoid using gestures such as

regularly putting a hand on the shoulder or arm. Whilst these gestures may be well intentioned, such acts could be misinterpreted. In situations where it is necessary for staff to restrain a child or Adult at Risk in order to prevent self-injury or injury to others, security should be called to deal with the situation.

4. Use official university channels (e.g. email) for communicating with a child or Adult at Risk (e.g. email). Using social media can be an appropriate communication method, however, issues raised via or observed on social media must be dealt with under this policy.
5. Staff must not share personal contact details with children and Adults at Risk³
6. Not take photographs of children/Adults at Risk unless asked to do so by a member of staff for project purposes where written approval has been provided for photography.
7. Respect a child's or Adult at Risk's right to personal privacy, while recognising that an agreement not to pass on information or to keep secrets must never be made with children or Adults at Risk.
8. Follow Health and Safety procedures and not put themselves or others in any unnecessary danger.
9. Only trained first aiders should administer First Aid. Staff should follow University First Aid procedures as highlighted on First Aid notices.

11. Relevant policies and provision

The scope of this policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

- Chaplaincy Code of Conduct
- Criminal Convictions Disclosure Policy (students and applicants)
- Data Protection Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Guidelines on the management of student disclosure of criminal convictions in the context of volunteering and placement learning
- Harassment and Bullying Policy Statement
- Information Security Policy
- Online Safety Policy Statement
- Policy and Procedures for the admission of under 18s onto undergraduate programmes (which also applies to those on undergraduate preparation courses)
- Policy and Procedures for the determination of 'fitness to practise'
- Prevent Policy Statement
- Public Interest Disclosure ('Whistleblowing') Policy and Procedures
- Remote Working Policy
- Research Ethics Committee
- Safety Note 54 - Children on University Premises
- Staff DBS checks and Employing Ex-Offenders: Guide to Policies and Procedures for Managers of Applicants
- Student Disciplinary Procedure (and Regulations for Student Conduct)
- Staff induction
- Staff training

³ University Chaplains are permitted to use their personal contacts with students

12. UoR support teams & relevant departments

The University of Reading is a large organisation with a complex structure that allows for a number of specialised teams to be in place to support staff in dealing with welfare and safeguarding concerns. Here is a list of key departments and support teams that are available:

- Welfare Team
- Hall Warden Team
- Chaplaincy
- Security Services
- Counselling & Wellbeing Team
- HR Department

13. Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing or influencing this policy are:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002:
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2017
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Children Act 2004
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Health Act 1983
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2009
- Working together to safeguard Children 2018

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The University Secretary	Annually	UEB	27 June 2016	1
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The University Secretary	Annually	UBTLSE	14 June 2023	5

Appendix 1

REPORTING/NOTIFICATIONS OF CONCERN

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

For students at risk of harm:

Safeguarding co-ordinators should complete the [notification of concern referral form](#) and send to the Welfare team. studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk

Where the concern is urgent contact the Student Welfare team by phone.

For staff (or others acting on behalf of the University) at risk of harm:

Contact hr@reading.ac.uk

For non-students and non-staff at risk of harm whatever the context:

Contact: a DSL through the Student Welfare Team
(studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk)

Appendix 2

HBS APPRENTICESHIP SAFEGUARDING ROLES

The University recognises the specific requirements for Apprenticeship safeguarding roles that sit within Henley Business School (HBS).

HBS has a Safeguarding Coordinator with additional responsibilities.

These additional roles are:

- To maintain proper records of referrals, complaints or concerns in relation to apprentices only;
- To ensure recording is properly stored and archived;
- To give feedback to the member of staff/liase as appropriate taking information sharing and confidentiality issues into account;
- To provide information and advice within HBS on safeguarding issues;
- To be able to provide (in conjunction with the DSL) advice and support to apprenticeship staff on issues relating to children and Adults at Risk protection; and
- To support the individual and ensure they are central to the process and kept informed throughout.

At the point that a safeguarding issue should be escalated, the HBS Safeguarding Coordinator will escalate the matter to a DSL through the Notification of Concern Form in Appendix A.

The DSL assigned to the issue will keep the HBS Safeguarding Coordinator updated to maintain the school's records.