



OAKSWOOD COLLEGE

Safeguarding Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy



Lead Safeguarding Officer: Muhammad K Rehman

Safeguarding Officer: Waqas Mehmood

This policy will have in place inclusive and integrated “safer” practices that promote and ensure the safety and well-being of all learners, while recognising the importance of having in place particular procedures and practices in support of colleges of learners that are or become vulnerable. Our policy will provide the framework for promoting and ensuring the safeguarding and protection of all learners at or associated with Oakswood College.

The Oakswood College will maintain procedures and practices which safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all its learners by identifying and applying best practice within the sector and ensuring that the Learner Safeguarding Policy and Procedures comply with legislative requirements and government recommendations.

Learner Safeguarding Policy Statement

To ensure that comprehensive and effective safeguarding practices exist within Oakswood College and that a culture of adherence to and continuous development of those practices is established and maintained, the Oakswood College will:

- Require all staff to provide and assure a safe environment for learners at all times
- Establish and maintain procedures and practices which minimise risks to all learners
- Publish and promote the right of every learner to work within a safe and cooperative learning and working environment Provide information and educate learners to equip them with awareness about how to stay safe.
- Provide training to maintain the awareness of all staff so that they recognise and react responsibly to apparent and potential instances of abuse or neglect of learners.
- Articulate and maintain procedures for identifying, investigating and reporting cases (or suspected cases) of abuse or potential for harm to learners.
- Collaborate and cooperate with external agencies to establish, maintain and coordinate procedures and arrangements for ensuring the safety of the learners, keeping the welfare of the learner at the centre of any action taken.

Policy and Statutory Framework

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Oakswood College will carry out its responsibilities under all relevant legislation, regulations and formal guidance for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- 1.2 Oakswood College hold as one of its highest priorities the health, safety and welfare of all children and vulnerable adults involved in courses or activities which come under their responsibility.
- 1.3 Oakswood College and its staff have a collective and individual duty to ensure that its staff fulfills their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and to prevent child abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.



- 1.4 Oakwood College will advise all parents/ guardians/ careers of learners under 18 of the existence of the College's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.
- 1.5 Oakwood College will advise children and vulnerable adults who are students about the standards of behavior and conduct they can expect from staff and volunteers and of what to do if they experience or suspect abuse.
- 1.6 Oakwood College will work with appropriate local agencies, and in particular Area Child Protection Committee and Children's Trusts, to ensure that children are safeguarded through the effective operation of the College's Children and Vulnerable Adult protection procedures.
- 1.7 Oakwood College recognises that any child and vulnerable adult can be subject to abuse and all allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with the Company's procedures.
- 1.8 Oakwood College recognises that it is the responsibility of all staff to act upon any concern no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
- 1.9 Oakwood College recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures that are designed to prevent or notify suspected abuse.
- 1.10 Oakwood College requires all staff to follow the Code Of Behavior On Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection, which is appended to this policy document, and will draw the attention of staff to this code of conduct and procedures in induction and relevant training.
- 1.11 Oakwood College is committed to supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with, or who come into contact with, children and vulnerable adults and to providing appropriate supervision.
- 1.12 Oakwood College will prepare and implement an action plan to ensure that it fulfills its duties to protect children and vulnerable adults.

2. Scope

This policy deals with the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Children are those under 18 years of age but relates to 16 to 26 year olds.

3. Key Principals - Statutory Framework

The Company's approach to safeguarding is based on the principles recognised within UK and international legislation and government guidance. The following has been taken into consideration

- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Colleges Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (particularly sections 5 & 6)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (came into force 1990)
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Police Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000



- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- 3.1. The Children Act 1989 provides the legal framework for the protection of children in the UK. Under the Children Act a child is defined as any person less than 18 years of age.
- 3.2. The Protection of Children Act 1999 requires employers to carry out Criminal Record Checks before employees are allowed to come into contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults. Oakswood College is required under this legislation to apply for an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau for staff working with such learners.
- 3.3. Working Together to Safeguard Children, 1999 is a Government Guidance document which sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote Children and Vulnerable Adults welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect and requires all educational organisations to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Area Child Protection Committee. The guidance makes clear that educational organisations are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse – these procedures should cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused or suspected of abuse.
- 3.4. DfEE Circular 10/95 (Protecting Children From Abuse: The Role Of The Education Service) derives from the Education Act 2002 and places the following responsibilities on all educational organisations:
 - a) Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
 - b) A Designated Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Manager should have responsibility for co-coordinating action within the organisation and for liaising with other agencies.
 - c) Staff with designated responsibility for child and Vulnerable Adult protection should receive appropriate training.
 - d) Educational organisations should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Area Child Protection Committee and, where appropriate, by the Local Education Authority or Social Services Department.
 - e) Educational Organisations should have procedures, of which all staff are aware, for handling suspected cases of abuse of children, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse. Circular 10/95 also states that “parents should be made aware of the (educational organisation’s) Child and Vulnerable Adult protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.” Oakswood College follows the detailed guidelines set out in Circular 10/95 in dealing with all cases of abuse or suspected abuse against children. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 This section of the Act requires providers to safeguard and promote the welfare of child and Vulnerable Adults. Oakswood College will follow any guidance issued on this section of the Act. The Company will keep its policy and procedures on Child and Vulnerable Adult protection under review to take account of any new Government legislation, regulations or best practice documents to ensure that staff are kept fully up to date with their responsibilities and duties with regard to the safety and well-being of Children and Vulnerable Adults.



3.5 Children's Trusts bring together all services for children and young people in a local area to focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. The outcomes that are most important to children and young people are:

- Being Healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Economic wellbeing
- Making a positive contribution

4. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored through update reports presented to the Senior Management Team, reviewed **annually or as required by change.**



Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Department of Health document 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (Summary)' 19 May 2003.

1. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the rights of children and vulnerable adults are protected through staff awareness of the issues and the following of the statutory and local guidelines in the reporting of concerns. It is the responsibility of all staff working within Oakwood College to record and report Child Protection concerns, i.e. where they believe a child has been or is at risk of abuse, neglect or significant harm. This responsibility extends to all staff and not just those specifically working with under 18s.

2. Definition of terms

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy describes the support and protection procedures for all learners under the age of 18, or vulnerable learners over this age, who may be “at risk” of abuse.

2.1 The definition of a “child”

“Child” is defined as all young people under the age of 18, in accordance with the 1989 Children Act.

2.2 The definition of a “Vulnerable Adult”

“Vulnerable Adult” is defined as, “a person who is, or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”, in accordance with County Council’s adult protection procedures.

3. Categories of Abuse

Children can be potentially abused within the family, community, and in organisations by employees (including those employed to promote their welfare and protect them from abuse), volunteers, visitors, and fellow students, the following are broad categories of abuse.

- **Physical Abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child and vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child and Vulnerable Adult who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy'.

- **Emotional Abuse:** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child and vulnerable adult’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed in children and vulnerable adults. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the



exploitation or corruption of children and vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet the child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adults health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child or vulnerable adults from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adults basic emotional needs.
- **Significant Harm:** Some children or vulnerable adults may be in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act V section 47 (1) introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of the children.
- **Financial Abuse** Some children and vulnerable adults may be abused or exploited financially including fraud and extortion.

4. Safeguarding Officer

All schools, colleges and providers are required to have a designated member of staff, who is assigned to act upon child and vulnerable adults protection concerns.

At the Oakswood College this is undertaken by the Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for co-ordinating action within the organisation and liaising with other agencies.

The Safeguarding Officer is required to know:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral
- the local Child and Vulnerable Adult protection procedures and the Child Protection Manager's
- role within them
- the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them
- the requirements of record keeping
- the conduct of a child protection conference and how the Child Protection Manager or other members of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it.



5. Advice to Staff on When to Take Action & How

Once you suspect or know of any abuse of any child or vulnerable adult, you should immediately inform The Safeguarding Officer in person or by telephone. Even if you have only heard rumors of abuse, or you have a suspicion but do not have firm evidence, you should still contact The Safeguarding Officer to discuss your concerns. You should also contact The Safeguarding Officer if you know or suspect that a member of staff or student has a previous history of abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults.

If, following your initial contact with The Safeguarding Officer, it is decided that the matter should be taken further; a written report must be prepared. A written report is essential to prevent any misrepresentation of your findings, and should be sent to The Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of the suspicion arising. The report should be factual and should not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented. The report should contain as much detail as possible, including any apparent physical signs of abuse or other circumstances which led to your suspicions, or the account given to you of abuse by the child or vulnerable adult concerned, as accurately as you are able to record it. The report should be signed, dated and a copy stored in a secure place. If you are unsure about what to write, you can get advice from The Safeguarding Officer.

If a child or vulnerable adult comes to you with a report of apparent abuse, you should listen carefully to the child or vulnerable adult, using the following guidelines. When listening to a child or vulnerable adult staff must:

- allow the child or vulnerable adult to speak without interruption
- never trivialise or exaggerate the issue
- never make suggestions
- never coach or lead the child or vulnerable adult in any way
- reassure the child or vulnerable adult, let them know you are glad they have spoken up and that they are right to do so
- always ask enough questions to clarify your understanding, do not probe or interrogate – no matter how well you know the child or vulnerable adult – spare them having to repeat themselves over and over.
- be honest – let the child or vulnerable adult know that you cannot keep this a secret; you will need to tell someone else.
- try to remain calm – remember this is not an easy thing for them to do.
- do not show your emotions – if you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your negative feelings are directed towards them
- let the child or vulnerable adult know that you are taking the matter very seriously
- make the child or vulnerable adult feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.



The Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for recording essential information about each case and for collecting reports and notes as appropriate.

Any detailed information about a case will be confined to the Safeguarding Officer and (if not involved in the allegations) the parents/ guardians/ carers, but where a referral to an external agency is to be made the Safeguarding Officer will advise the Operations Director. The Manager(s) and staff reporting the allegations will be kept informed of the progress of the case on a 'need to know' basis.

6. What Happens Next?

Taking into account all the information available, The Safeguarding Officer will decide on the next steps, which may include taking no further action. Where The Safeguarding Officer decides that further action is necessary, this may be to:

- Seek further advice from The Children's Trust
- Make a referral to the appropriate agency, as signposted.
- Report the incident to a designated Social Worker, as signposted.
- Report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected If a referral is made, this must be confirmed in writing to the appropriate agency within 24 hours.

The Safeguarding Officer may consider that those involved may require counselling. Where it is felt there is a need for counselling (which could be for the child/ren, other students, staff, parents or carers involved) The Safeguarding Officer will make the necessary arrangements.

7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality and trust should be maintained as far as possible, but staff must act on the basis that the safety of the child and vulnerable adults is the overriding concern. The degree of confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the child or vulnerable adults. The child or vulnerable adults should be informed at the earliest possible stage of the disclosure that the information will be passed on. All conversation regarding a child or vulnerable adults should always be held in private. Oakswood College complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, which allows for disclosure of personal data where this is necessary to protect the vital interests of a child and vulnerable adults.

Whatever happens, you should always be open and honest with the child or vulnerable adult if you intend to take the case further.

Staff must not discuss the case with anyone other than those involved in the case. If staff have any concerns about the progress of the case or have any other concerns these must be discussed with The Safeguarding Officer.

8. Allegations Against Staff

The primary concern of the Company is to ensure the safety of the child and vulnerable adults. It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a member staff that action is taken quickly and



professionally whatever the validity. There are occasions where a child or vulnerable adult will accuse a member of staff of physically or sexually abusing them. In some cases this may be false or unfounded. However in some cases the allegations may be true. Any instance of a child or vulnerable adults being abused by a member of staff is particularly serious. On the other hand for an innocent person to be accused of such an act is a serious ordeal which can result in long term damage to their health and career. In the event that any member of staff suspects any other member of staff of abusing a student, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to the Operations Manager and The Safeguarding Officer.

On being notified of any such matter The Safeguarding Officer shall:

- Notify the Operations Manager
- Take such steps as s/he considers necessary to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other child or vulnerable adult who might be at risk
- Report the matter to the local social services department.
- Ensure that a report of the matter is completed by the person who reported the original concern.

If the allegation concerns the Operations Manager, the matter should be discussed with The Safeguarding Officer who will discuss it with the Managing Director, in addition to following the normal procedures for Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection. If the allegation concerns The Safeguarding Officer the matter should be discussed with the Operations Manager, who will discuss it with the Managing Director in addition to following the normal procedure for Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection.

Code of behaviour on child and vulnerable adult's protection for Oakwood College staff

Oakwood College recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to all situations at all times whereby staff come into contact with children and vulnerable adults and to guarantee the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults and staff.

However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff in order to fulfill their roles and duty of care within the College. This code should assist in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and in the protection of both children and vulnerable adults and members of staff.

Staff must:

Implement the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and Procedures at all times, including acting to promote children and vulnerable adults welfare, prevent abuse and report any abuse discovered or suspected.

Staff must never:

- engage in rough, physical games including horseplay with children and vulnerable adults/ students.
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind. The main principles of touch are:
- touch should always be in response to the child or vulnerable adult's need



- touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child or vulnerable adults.
- touch should always be with a child or vulnerable adult's permission
- do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves or that their parent can do for them.
- Physically restrain a child or vulnerable adult unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of the child and vulnerable adults/other children/visitors or staff/yourself.

In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable; otherwise the action can be defined as assault.

- make sexually suggestive comments to or within earshot of a child or vulnerable adult.
- have children or vulnerable adults on their own in a vehicle. Where circumstances require the transportation of children or vulnerable adults in their vehicle, another member of staff must travel in the vehicle. Also it is essential that there is adequate insurance for the vehicle to cover transporting children or vulnerable adults as part of the business of your work. In extreme emergencies (for medical purposes) where it is required to transport a child or vulnerable adult on their own, it is essential that another leader and the parent is notified immediately
- take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet unless another adult is present or has been made aware (this may include a parent, College leader)
- spend time alone with a child or vulnerable adult on his/her own, outside of the normal tutorial/ classroom situation. If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that you can be clearly observed by others.
- engage in a personal relationship with a child or vulnerable adult/student, or a child or vulnerable adult who becomes a student, beyond that appropriate for a normal teacher/ student relationship.

6. Implications for staff

Staff who breach any of the above may be subject to the disciplinary procedure. If an allegation against a member of staff has occurred then an investigation will be carried out.

Oakswood College reserves the right to suspend any member of staff under the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy to safeguard young people and Vulnerable Adults whilst an internal and/or external investigation takes place. The company can implement its own internal investigation during any stage of this process. This may result in disciplinary action being taken on a member of staff.

6.1 Suspension of staff under the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection procedure.

Should the company implement the Child and Vulnerable Adult protection Procedure and decide to suspend the employee; the following procedure will be undertaken:

- a) The employee concerned will be required to attend a meeting with the Operations Director. The employee will have the opportunity to be accompanied by a colleague, or a trade union representative.



- b) During the meeting, the employee will be provided with written confirmation of the suspension, and the opportunity to ask any questions with regards to the contents of the letter.
- c) If the suspension is subject to external investigation, the Company management representatives will be unable to discuss the details of any allegations made under the Child Protection Act (1999).

DISCLOSURES Barring Disclosure

Under the Child Protection Act 1999 (Section 7) Oakswood College is designated as a child care organisation. This means that all staff, prospective employees and students on placements that come into contact with children must be checked with the Criminal Records Bureau to prevent individuals considered unsuitable to work with children, gaining employment at Oakswood College.

To meet these requirements, Oakswood College will ensure that ALL new members of staff, training, or non-training will undergo CRB clearance. As this process can take up to four months, Oakswood College will ask all new employees to sign a declaration, stating that they are not aware of any convictions that could hinder their employment at the Company. Further to this, all managers will be asked to keep members of staff waiting for clearance under observation. It is also apparent that Oakswood College has employees in differing roles that do not currently have CRB clearance. To ensure that Oakswood College meets the requirements set out in the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy (updated Aug 07), the company will now seek to obtain CRB clearance for every member of staff working on a full time, part time basis. To support this process, the updated Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedure will be issued to every member of staff, and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection briefing sessions will be held to communicate the policy and implications of the 1999 Child Protection Act.



Oakwood College Ltd Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Disclosure/Concern Form

Learner's Name	
Address	
Date of Birth	
Programme Attended:	
BRIEF DETAILS OF THE ALLEGATIONS/DISCLOSURE/CONCERN <i>Use the learners own words (factual information only. What happened? Who was involved? When did it happen? Where did it happen? How did it happen?)</i>	
Date & Place of Disclosure/Concern	
Member of Staff (name)	Date:
Member of Staff (signature)	Date:
Learner's Signature	Date:

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Questionnaire

1. What is the definition of a Vulnerable Adult?
2. What is the definition of a Child?
3. Name the possible categories of abuse.
4. What are the five Every Child Matters Outcomes identified by the Children's Trust?
5. What is the role of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Manager
6. Should you investigate the matter yourself?
7. What must you do within 24 hours if the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Manager decides an issue should be taken further?



8. List 5 ways in which you should or should not behave if a client discloses something to you that may need to be reported in line with the Policy?
9. If a child asks you to keep a secret relating to a disclosure, what should you do?
10. Are you allowed to tell your line manager the detail about a disclosure?
11. When working with children and vulnerable adults, how are you to behave and what must you never do?