Safeguarding Policy 2025-2026

1. Background

In September 2025 the Department for Education statutory guidance document (Keeping children safe in education 2025) came into effect replacing the previous year's version. This document continues to focus on the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under the provisions of the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and following publication of Section 175 of The Education Act 2002 and 2011.

Section 175 of the Education Act places a duty of care on Local Education Authorities, and on governing bodies of schools and further education institutions to make arrangements for carrying out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children covers more than child protection. The requirements for the College are for policies and procedures that cover arrangements not just for meeting the welfare and safeguarding needs of children, but also the needs of adults at risk and young people as well as ensuring appropriate practices for staff recruitment and selection and providing a safe and secure environment in which to study.

Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Care and support statutory guidance (latest iteration July 2025.)

In accordance with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, there is a statutory duty on colleges to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is known as the Prevent duty. To fulfil this duty the college liaises closely with the local area prevent lead to receive updates regarding local concerns and to refer students of concern to the Channel process when appropriate. The Prevent strategy, first published by the Government in 2011, is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The College accepts the obligations arising from the Prevent legislation as an important element of its general duty of care to protect its staff and students from all forms of harm and will implement Prevent procedures in line with Prevent National Guidance 2023 (Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales (accessible) - GOV.UK) The College recognises that radicalisation and extremism can put individuals at risk of being drawn into violence and criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm to them. Working to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism is an act of safeguarding. The College is committed both to protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom and to protecting and safeguarding its students from the risk of being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent Duty will be discharged in a way that continues to encourage the exploration of political, philosophical and religious ideas and beliefs.

The College accepts the obligations arising from Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and the College Safeguarding policy and procedures are discharged in line with KCSIE 2025 regional South West Child Protection procedures. South West Child Protection Procedures online for under 18 students, Care and Support statutory guidance for over 18 students and

To further safeguard our students in regard to the threats of terrorism the college has also implemented a procedure in the case of critical incidents based on the Run Hide Tell guidance 2015.

2. Definitions

- Children and young people - those aged under 18 years
- Adults at Risk – anyone aged 18 years of above who is or may need of services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of unable to protect themselves against harm, abuse or exploitation.
- LSB/ LSP– local area safeguarding and community safety board/ partnership.
- LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer
- Work experience – short and clearly defined as work experience with the aim of improving employability skills as well as curriculum focus if appropriate.
- Work placement – students undertaking work placement over a long period of time (one or two days per week over a period of two months or more)
- KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education)- national safeguarding guidance document.

3. Scope

3.1. The Safeguarding Policy applies to all College staff, students and contracted staff, whether they work or study in the main College campuses, outreach centres, remotely (e.g. home working) or other designated areas, volunteers and governors.

3.2. The policy applies to students on work experience and placement programmes and those engaged on any College organised off site activity.

3.3. The policy applies to working arrangements with other agencies to support the College's Safeguarding Policy, including local education authorities, Learning Partnership West, schools, support agencies and employers.

3.4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students is everyone's responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with students and their families has a role to play. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all college staff should make sure their approach is student centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the student.

3.5. No single College staff member can have a full picture of a student's needs and circumstances. If learners and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

3.6. The College have a zero-tolerance approach to any type of abuse, and staff and governors are trained in how to raise any concerns they may have and how to handle a disclosure from learners or staff in a safe and confidential way.

4. Intent

The intent of the Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that:

4.1. A safe environment is provided for students at all times.

4.2. Students who are at risk of and/or likely to suffer significant harm are identified, and appropriate action is taken. This includes the risk of radicalisation as noted in the Prevent duty.

4.3. There exist safe recruitment practices in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with or in proximity to children and students. The College's Recruitment and Selection Policy cover these in more detail.

4.4. Staff are made aware of issues relating to the Safeguarding and welfare of students (more detail of specific safeguarding issues is included in the College Safeguarding Procedures).

4.5. The College's safeguarding practices align with statutory guidance and promote the mental health and well-being of students.

5. Confidentiality and sharing information

5.1. Once a disclosure and referral have been made, the incident should be considered confidential – unless the information indicates that the person is at risk of harm from others or to themselves. Then the information will be shared with the DSL (or Safeguarding Team) and/or other agencies/professionals who are able to take protective action.

5.2. All information regarding child protection issues will be kept in a secure electronic system.

5.3. The College is obliged to work and share information with external agencies charged with the protection of children and young people. This includes but is not limited to local authorities, the police, local schools, health organisations and local safeguarding boards/ partnership but is based on the 'need to know' principle.

5.4. The College has representation on a range of working groups led by the Local Safeguarding Boards or partnerships (LSB's/LSP's) relevant to safeguarding including Building the Bridge (Prevent), Serious Youth Violence Crime group, the cities substance misuse working group, the Thrive Mental Health Partnership.

5.5. The College commits to share information with partner agencies and other official support organisations and to allow safe access to students on-site if required and appropriate.

5.6. The College works closely with the area Prevent team and through them refers to the Channel process when necessary.

5.7. The College has developed systems to ensure effective communication between local agencies.

5.8. Note: 'confidentiality' is often misunderstood. An over emphasis on confidentiality can leave young people or adults at risk in danger of harm. If something is confidential, this does not mean that it cannot be shared. GDPR should be no barrier to information sharing about a person in need, as long as appropriate protocol is followed. However, it is important to:

- Share only what it is necessary to share to protect a child/young person or an adult at risk
- Record what you shared, and with whom
- Record your reasons for sharing for further information refer to; DfE guidance on information sharing
- Inform the individual making the disclosure that information they provide will be shared, why and with whom.

- Share information in accordance with the college's police communication procedure regarding students (referenced in safeguarding procedures)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Designated Senior Staff Member for Child Protection

6.1.1. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) with lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding issues are the Deputy Principal, Director of Student Experience, Quality and Safeguarding, the Head of Safeguarding.

6.1.2. The DSL has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness amongst staff of issues relating to the welfare of young people and adults at risk, and the promotion of a safe environment for the students learning within the College.

6.1.3. DSL's responsibilities cannot be delegated. The College is committed to providing the DSL with sufficient time, support, training, and resources to carry out their duties effectively.

6.1.4. The Assistant Safeguarding and Prevent Lead Annette Easy will support however responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, as set out above, remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

6.1.5. The DSL will oversee the referral of alleged harm or abuse to the relevant investigating agencies in line with "Keeping Bristol Safe" procedures.

6.1.6. The DSL is also responsible for ensuring that:

- Advice and support to staff on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, including e-safety, is provided.
- The DSL takes lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place at the college.
- A proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern is maintained (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- Ensuring that parents of young people and adults at risk within the College are aware of the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.
- The College liaises with youth justice services and Probation services to ensure appropriate arrangements are made.
- Staff receive initial safeguarding training and are aware of the College safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- The College's Safeguarding Committee meets as a minimum once per term to scrutinise the Safeguarding and Prevent strategic action plan and risk register.
- The DSL will ensure that the College's safeguarding records are maintained in accordance with the statutory guidance, including the types of records that should be kept, how long they should be retained, and who should have access to them.
- A Safeguarding and Prevent strategic action plan and risk register is prepared and revised annually to ensure in line with current national and local Safeguarding guidance.
- The College liaises with local authorities, other appropriate agencies and local Safeguarding boards/ partnerships.
- The College liaises with secondary schools which send pupils to the College to ensure that

appropriate arrangements are made for their pupils.

- Appropriate Safeguarding team representation is made available when appropriate for student meetings in line with the Acceptable Behaviour Commitment to study Policy and Fitness to Study policy.
- A termly report is provided to the Governing Body of the College setting out how the College has discharged its duties relating to Safeguarding and Prevent each term throughout the academic year.
- An annual report is provided to the Governing Body of the College setting out how the College has discharged its duties relating to Safeguarding and Prevent each term throughout the academic year.

6.2. Designated Safeguarding Governor

6.2.1. The College will have a designated governor for safeguarding who will link termly with the College DSL to conduct internal Safeguarding thematic audits to support continued improved practice and will receive summaries of safeguarding data and an overview of high-profile safeguarding cases. The designated safeguarding governor will also be involved in any strategic changes to service.

6.3. Designated Staff Members for Safeguarding (Safeguarding Officers)

6.3.1. The College will appoint an appropriate number of designated Safeguarding Advisors. These will be based across all sites.
The College also has a Senior Safeguarding advisor.
In addition to this team, key safeguarding staff also includes Head of ICT Network and Engineering Services and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
Appropriate training and support will be provided to enable the designated staff to fulfil their role.

6.3.2. The Safeguarding Advisors:

- Report to the Head of Safeguarding via the Assistant Prevent and Safeguarding Lead.
- Will know how to make an appropriate referral
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to Safeguarding
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to students studying at the College
- Will work collaboratively with other departments across the College to advocate for students to promote their health, well-being and safeguarding needs.
- Have received training in safeguarding issues and inter-agency working, as required by the "Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership" and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.
- Will deal with individual cases, including advocating to colleagues within College and considering referrals to external agencies to reduce risk and/or promote health and wellbeing.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies and share information to safeguard students.

6.3.3 The Senior Safeguarding Advisor:

- Report to the Head of Safeguarding via the Assistant Prevent and Safeguarding Lead.

- Will know how to make an appropriate referral
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to Safeguarding
- Will work collaboratively with other departments across the College to advocate for students to promote their health, well-being and safeguarding needs.
- Have received training in safeguarding issues and inter-agency working, as required by the "Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership" and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.
- Will attend and represent the College Safeguarding Team at multi-agency safeguarding meetings relating to students, sharing appropriate information and being a Safeguarding decision maker.

7. Procedures

8.1 To underpin this policy, the College has a number of related procedures and processes. These include:

- Safeguarding Procedures.
- People services procedures including grievance and discipline
- Data Protection procedures
- Visiting Speakers, Organisations and Events Protocol

8. Mental Health and Well-being

8.1. The College recognises the importance of mental health and well-being in safeguarding. The College is committed to:

- Promoting students' mental health and well-being through a range of initiatives and support services.
- Providing staff with training and resources to identify and respond to mental health concerns
- Working with external agencies to provide specialist support to students experiencing mental health difficulties.

9. Online Safety

9.1 The College is committed to ensuring that students are safe online. The College will:

- Provide students and staff with education and guidance on online safety (including guidance on misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.)
- Implement appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to protect students from online risks (in line with filtering and monitoring standards set out by the DfE in KCISE 2025.)
- Respond effectively to any incidents of online abuse or harm
- Ensure AI is used safely within the College environment in line with the DfE Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK
- Ensure staff and students are aware of the safeguarding risks linked to the use of AI.
- Embed a new digital policy to include use of AI (in line with KCSIE 2025.)

10. Young Carers

10.1. The College is committed to supporting the well-being and achievement of Young Carers. The College will:

- Ensure Young carers are identified (either through self-identification or working with local services to identify.)
- Ensure staff have awareness of how young carers may present.
- Have a standalone Young Carers Policy to support Young Carers.
- Ensure support is in place within the College environment for young carers and reasonable adjustments made where appropriate.
- Make referrals to external support services for Young Carers.
- Have a Dedicated Young Carers Lead for oversight of young carers to review attendance and attainment.

11 Care experienced students (children who have been looked after or adult care leavers):

11.1 The College is committed to promoting and supporting the well-being and achievement of Care Experienced students.
The College will:

- Ensure Care Experienced students are identified (either through self-identification or working with partner agencies to identify.)
- Ensure effective transition is in place.
- Recognise being Care Experienced as a protected characteristic.
- Ensure staff receive training so they have awareness of how care experienced students may present.
- Ensure support is in place within the College environment for care experienced students via dedicated Care Experienced mentors.
- Have a Designated Lead for Care Experienced students that works collaboratively with partner agencies and virtual schools.

12. Gender questioning students

12.1 The College is committed to promoting and supporting the well-being of gender questioning and transgender students. City of Bristol college values all of its students equally. It will neither practise nor permit unlawful discrimination based on any protected characteristic.

12.2 We recognise that many transgender people (and their families, partners and friends) may experience discrimination in their lives.

12.3 The College will:

- Work to provide a safe and inclusive culture and environment. Bullying or hate incidents around gender identity will not be tolerated and will be addressed in line with the Positive ABC Policy (Attendance,

Behaviour, and Commitment to Study) and/or Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies and procedures.

- Follow the guiding principles outlined by the Department for Education around gender questioning students in KCSIE 2025.
- Signpost students, families, and caregivers to appropriate external support and advice.
- Include parents and/or caregivers in decisions (unless unsafe to do so) where a request is made for a student to socially transition in the College environment.

12.4 All transgender students have the following options:

- To choose whether to declare their trans or gender identity. This will include to whom they declare it, and the circumstances in which it may or may not be declared.
- They can request the College to update its documents, records, and systems to acknowledge their affirmed gender, once they have decided to commence living full-time in their acquired gender. A record of students' biological sex will be maintained in accordance with legal requirements.

12.5 Name changing procedure

Where a student has legally changed their name, and would like their records amended they should immediately inform Student Services

12.6 The College will then:

- Update their student record with the new name, and update the relevant awarding organisations, where it is legal for us to do so.
- Ensure that, from that point onwards, all communications use their chosen name.

12.7 Where a student has *not yet legally* changed their name but would like to be referred to by an alternative name, they should immediately inform Student Services

12.8 The College will then:

- Amend internal records to reflect their chosen name under '*Known as name'* for either first and/or surname category. This *'known as name'* will be used internally on attendance records etc. Official records for exam registration etc cannot be changed.

12.9 Pronouns

12.8 The College acknowledges the importance of using a person's correct pronouns as an aspect of affirming their gender identity. Preferred pronouns are self-identified by students at enrolment and can be updated at any point in their learning journey with us.

12.9 All staff are expected to:

- Recognise that all students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. All staff should be aware of this and conduct themselves with appropriate behaviour as detailed in the College's staff code of conduct.
- Respect students' preferred pronouns.

- Engage in regular training to raise awareness of inclusive language and the evolving understanding of gender diversity.

12.10 Gender marker change procedure

Where a student has a gender marker in their passport that is different to that identified as their biological sex at enrolment, or where they are over 18 and have a Gender Recognition Certificate and they would like to have their College records amended they should immediately inform Student Services.

12.11 The College will:

- Update their student record with the new name, and update the relevant awarding organisations, where it is legal for us to do so.
- For students who are asylum seekers or refugees the College records are legally required to match those held by the Home Office.

12.12 Where a student does not have an official gender marker (for example, in their passport) or a Gender Recognition Certificate that aligns with their preferred gender identity, but requests that College records be updated to reflect their preferred gender, the College will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. A record of students' biological sex will remain, in accordance with legal requirements. When deciding whether to amend a student's records, the College will consider the views of all parties, including parents / carergivers (where appropriate and where it is safe to do so) and any relevant legal obligations to determine a reasonable way forward that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the student.

12.13 Facilities and Spaces

12.14 Gender-neutral and single-sex facilities are available at all of our College owned campuses.

Access to single-sex facilities will be by biological sex. Where this creates discomfort or challenges for transgender or non-binary students, the College will work collaboratively with them and their parent(s) / caregivers (where it is safe and appropriate to do so) to identify reasonable adjustments, such as access to gender-neutral facilities. No student will ever be left without access to toilet facilities.

12.16 Accommodation on residential trips

12.17 Existing guidance and practice has long been that students who are under 18, or in cohorts with under 18 year olds, should be accommodated separately accordingly to their gender. Where shared residential accommodation is provided based on gender, this will be allocated on biological status only.

12.18 Where this creates discomfort or challenges for transgender or non-binary students, the College will work collaboratively with them and their parent(s) / caregivers (as appropriate and where it is safe to do so) to identify reasonable adjustments, such as access to individual accommodation.

The College is navigating this space in full recognition of the tensions and conflicts within it as we keep inclusion at the heart of what we do. This policy will be kept under review.

13: RHSE (Relationships, Health, Sex Education):

13.1 The College is committed to supporting the psycho-social education of students. The College will:

- Have a standalone RHSE policy by September 2026 as required by DfE RHSE Guidance July 2025.
- Ensure the curriculum offered to students is adapted to reflect the new DfE RHSE July 2025 guidance.

14: Information sharing:

14.1. The College is committed to effective information sharing with other agencies involved in safeguarding. The College will:

- Share information in a timely and appropriate manner, in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to information sharing
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

15.Monitoring and Review

15.1. The DSL/Head of Safeguarding will monitor and review this policy annually.

15.2. The DSL/Head of Safeguarding will prepare an annual report for the Governing Body, which reviews how the duties have been discharged.

15.3. Any significant deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding and child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay and will be brought to the attention of the College's Strategic Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

15.4. This policy should not be read in isolation and should be cross-referenced with all relevant College employment and student policies and procedures.

16. Linked policies

- Safeguarding Procedures
- Young Carers Policy
- Trauma-informed strategy
- Death of a student procedure
- Positive handling policy
- Trauma-informed strategy
- Visiting Speaker Procedure
- Critical incident response plan
- People Services procedures including grievance and discipline
- ABC - Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Policy
- Fitness to study policy
- Data Protection policy
- Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement
- Health and Safety Policy
- Admissions Policy
- IT Policy & Procedures
- Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy

Version	
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Lead Officer:	Head of Safeguarding
Senior Manager responsible:	Director of Student Experience, Quality and Safeguarding