

Child Protection: Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy 2024-25

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers September 2024

(Part A)


Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal Student Services
Date issued:	1 st September 2024
Date for review:	1 st September 2025

Endorsed and approved by Policy & Strategy Group

Date: September 2024

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Principal



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CHILD PROTECTION: SAFEGUARDING AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

In September 2022 the Department of Education and Skills published an updated guidance document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under the provisions of the Children Act 1989 and following publication of Section 175 of The Education Act 2002.

- 1.2 Section 175 places a duty of care on Local 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. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* recognises that 'where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child'.
- 1.3 Northampton College recognises its duty in this area and seeks to meet the welfare and safeguarding needs of children and vulnerable adults. This includes ensuring appropriate recruitment and selection practices in respect to potential employees and the provision of a safe and secure environment in which to study.
- 1.4 National and regional awareness of the importance of safeguarding young people against radical extremism has grown, and the College is actively engaging in the government's 'Prevent' agenda.
- 1.5 There is continued regional and national concern about child sexual exploitation gangs highlighted by recent widely reported prosecutions, for example the prosecution, in 2016, of nine men in Rochdale for serious sexual offences against teenage girls over an extended period of time.

2. DEFINITIONS

- Children and young people – those aged under 18 years
- Vulnerable adults – those aged 18 and over who may be considered vulnerable to abuse, for example those with learning difficulties or disabilities
- NSCP – Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

3. SCOPE

The “**Child Protection: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**” applies to all College staff, job applicants, visitors, contactors, students, prospective students, volunteers and governors whether they work or study in the main College campuses, outreach centres, or other designated areas.

- 3.2 The policy recognises that somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
- 3.3 The policy acknowledges that research has found that disabled children are more likely to be abused and neglected than non-disabled children.

- 3.4 The policy applies to students on work placements and work-based and workplace learning programmes, apprentices, and those engaged on any College-organised off-site activity.
- 3.5 The policy applies to working arrangements with other agencies to support the College’s **“Child Protection: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy”**, including local education authorities, schools, support agencies, sub-contractors and employers.

4. INTENT

The intent of the **“Child Protection Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy”** is to ensure that:

- 4.1 A safe environment is provided at College for children and vulnerable adults at all times, including support in ensuring children and vulnerable adults are kept safe online.
- 4.2 The College is able to take appropriate action to protect young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; bullying in all its forms; neglect; radicalisation; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; sexual and financial exploitation (this list is not exhaustive). Action will be taken whether or not the risk of harm occurs in the physical world or online.
- 4.3 Safe recruitment practices exist in checking the suitability of staff, governors, contractors and volunteers to work with, or in proximity, to children and vulnerable adults.
- 4.4 All staff and governors are trained to recognise the types of harm recognised above and take appropriate action in line with College procedures and with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- 4.5 The College ensures that it regularly consults with students about how safe they feel and their general welfare, with action taken where students tell us they do not feel safe.
- 4.6 The College takes steps to support and protect the most vulnerable students, including those under, or formerly under, the care of the Local Authority. The College will work with other organisations in supporting and protecting all students, for example, the police in the case of a College student becoming a missing child.

5. DESIGNATED STAFF AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Designated Governor for Safeguarding

5.1.1 The designated Governor with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection issues is:

Paul Nutter

Telephone: 07894257638

Email: paulnutter1@hotmail.co.uk

- The designated Governor has a duty to be familiar with LA guidance and policy relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection and associated issues.
- To ensure that the Governing Body puts in place a suitable Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures

- To champion safeguarding and child protection issues within the college
- To encourage other members of the governing body to develop their understanding of the governing body's responsibilities with regard to Child Protection and assist them to perform their functions in respect of Safeguarding Children and Young People
- To contribute to ensuring any deficiencies in the college's safeguarding practices are addressed which may be brought to Governors' attention by a member of college staff, a student, a employer, a parent, an officer of the Authority or from any other source.
- To meet regularly with the senior member of the college's leadership team who is the designated teacher for safeguarding and child protection in order to monitor the effectiveness of the governing body's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- To ensure that the governing body receives an annual report on the implementation of the college's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- To liaise with the Chair of Governors in relation to any safeguarding concerns reported in regard to the college Principal.

5.2 Designated senior staff member for Safeguarding

- 5.2.1 The designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection issues is:

Jan Hutt, Vice Principal – People and Organisational Development

Telephone 01604 734395

Email: Jan.Hutt@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

- 5.2.2 The senior staff member has lead responsibility for raising employee's awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, alongside the promotion of a safe environment for children and young people learning within the College or engaged in College led activity.

- 5.2.3 The senior staff member will receive training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.

5.3 Designated Manager for Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 The designated manager for safeguarding and child protection issues is:

Mark Owen, Assistant Principal - Student Services

Telephone 01604 734015

email: mark.owen@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

- 5.3.2 The designated manager will oversee the referral of alleged harm or abuse to the relevant investigating agencies in line with NSCP procedures.

- 5.3.3 The designated manager is also responsible for ensuring that:

- The College’s Safeguarding Committee meets at a minimum once per term
- Advice and support to staff on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, including e-safety, is provided.
- 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 and carers of children and vulnerable adults within the College are aware of the College’s Child Protection: Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy
- The College liaises with local authorities and Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (and other appropriate agencies)
- The College liaises with secondary schools which send pupils to the College to ensure that necessary awareness of Child Protection issues is shared appropriately
- The College liaises with employers and training organisations that receive children or vulnerable adults from the College on work experience and placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place
- Staff receive initial safeguarding training and are aware of the College’s safeguarding and child protection procedures, and of the principles of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- A Safeguarding Action Plan is prepared and reviewed annually and is subject to Senior Management team scrutiny.
- The College responds appropriately to the Counter Terrorism duty (PREVENT) and gives due regard to the need to safeguard young people against potential radicalisation.

5.3.4 The designated manager will provide an annual report to the Governing Body of the College setting out how the College has discharged its duties.

5.4 Designated Staff Members for Safeguarding (Safeguarding Officers)

5.4.1 The College will appoint an appropriate number of designated Safeguarding Officers, and there are both male and female officers available. The Safeguarding Officers at the time of writing are:

Name	Email	Telephone
Mark Owen	mark.owen@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734015
Julie Kennedy	julie.kennedy@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734244
Jo Cox	Jo.Cox@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 736219
Jo Davies	jo.davies@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 736320
Carrie Newton	carrie.newton@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734247
Jade Care	Jade.Care@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734046
Jan Hutt	Jan.Hutt@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734395
Amy Owers	Amy.Owers@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734075

Note that if a situation arises in which none of the Safeguarding Officers are available, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* advises that ‘any staff member can refer their concerns to children’s social care directly’ (Section 17). Northamptonshire Children’s Trust can be contacted on 0300 126 7000.

5.4.2 Appropriate training and support will be provided to enable the designated staff to fulfil their role. Safeguarding Officers will:

- Report to the senior member of staff or manager with lead responsibility
- Be trained to make appropriate referrals to Children's/Adult Social Care
- Be available to advise and support other staff on issues relating to child protection
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to children and young people studying at the College
- Deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate
- Work together to share best practice in safeguarding
- Have received training in safeguarding issues and inter-agency working, as required by the NSCP and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years

5.5 Allegations of harm or abuse against children or vulnerable adults

- 5.5.1 Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to a designated Safeguarding Officer.
- 5.5.2 Records of concerns about children and vulnerable adults will be kept, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- 5.5.3 All records will be kept securely on the Colleges safeguarding database which is password protected. Paper records will be scanned and added to secure digital records as well as locked in a central location accessible only by designated staff.

5.6 Children on school link programmes

- 5.6.1 The College has a duty of care towards young people who are studying on a school link programme whilst on College premises. In arranging school link programmes for young people of compulsory school age the College will:
- Provide schools with adequate details of provision to enable the school to obtain parental consent for their child to participate. The College will require evidence of this written consent
 - Seek to ensure that, for young people with special education needs or disability (SEND), the College is informed of their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), or other relevant documentation e.g. statements, in order to determine the level and type of support needed
 - Request details from the school of any medical needs or requirements a young person may have and agree with the school how the necessary support can be provided
 - Ensure that young people are made aware of the general standards of safety with which all young people and FE college students should comply.
- 5.6.2 Concerns regarding safeguarding or child protection for young people on school link programmes must be referred to the Child Protection Officer at the school where the child is on roll (or the child's social worker if the child is not on a school roll), and to the relevant College Safeguarding Officer if other College students or staff are involved or affected.

5.7 Work placements, work-based and workplace learning

- 5.7.1 Staff who arrange, vet and monitor work placements and work-based or workplace learning must undertake appropriate safeguarding training.
- 5.7.2 Organisations who offer work placements or work-based / workplace learning for College students will be vetted for their suitability to do so. This will include both a formal health and safety assessment and safeguarding risk assessment completed by College staff.

5.7.3 When the assessment suggests that an employer does not have safeguarding and child protection policies, or awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues, or where there is any evidence of risks to a student's safety, the College will ensure that no students are placed with that employer until a College Safeguarding Officer has made an appropriate assessment. If an employer is deemed unsuitable for work experience placements or work-based / workplace learning, the College will make the NSCP aware of this.

5.7.4 Children and vulnerable adults who are placed with employers will be given clear advice about whom to contact if they are worried or uncomfortable about the surroundings, or if they suffer abuse.

5.8 Support for students, parents and staff

5.8.1 Students will be made aware of possible risks to their safety, including e-safety, through both tutorials and in the course of studying in the College, with the intent that they are better able to protect themselves from situations of potential harm.

5.8.2 The College will seek to ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the College and staff for safeguarding and child protection by setting out its obligations in corporate publications.

5.8.3 Safeguarding Officers and staff who may receive disclosures from young people may find themselves distressed by what they have witnessed or learnt. The College recognises this possibility and will support staff in this situation via access to a telephone counselling service or other appropriate support.

5.9 Recruitment of staff and volunteers

5.9.1 Recruitment procedures will seek to reflect the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and will aim to 'deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children' (Section 46).

5.9.2 The College will ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff, governors, contractors, and volunteers who have substantial access to children and vulnerable adults, including enhanced DBS checks, and that records are kept of such checks. This process is detailed further in the College Recruitment and Selection Policy

5.9.3 HR staff and managers chairing interview panels are trained in Safer Recruitment. A range of Safe Recruitment procedures will be employed, and these are described in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

5.10 Staff training and development

5.10.1 The College will provide safeguarding and child protection training for all staff. The training will:

- be available online to reach the greatest number of staff, and face to face where this is more appropriate
- help staff to recognise the signs of possible harm to children and young people
- ensure staff know what to do, when possible, harm is suspected (or when a young person makes a safeguarding disclosure), and whom to contact

- inform staff of College procedures and policies in the area, relevant legislation, and the role of the designated members of staff for child protection.
- 5.10.2 Safeguarding and child protection training is included within the induction programme for all new staff. The College reserves the right to terminate the employment of staff who have not attended such training by the end of their 2nd month of their employment.
- 5.10.3 Refresher training for all staff will be undertaken every 2 years.
- 5.10.4 Staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities will be supported in completing training offered by the local authority on an ongoing basis and within given timescales for refreshing knowledge.
- 5.10.5 All staff will be asked to make themselves familiar with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff* (September 2024).

5.11 Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff

- 5.11.1 Where there is an allegation of harm or abuse against staff, both inside and outside the work setting, the College will work to ensure allegations are dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently. Procedures under this policy apply to all staff, as well as volunteers. These procedures are detailed in the College **'Child Protection: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidelines for Staff (Part B)**.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be referred to in the College's corporate publications.

- 6.2 The College's Safeguarding Committee will monitor and review this policy annually.
- 6.3 The Designated Manager for Safeguarding will prepare an annual report for the Governing Body, which reviews how the duties have been discharged.
- 6.4 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 Senior Management Team and the Governing Body.
- 6.5 This policy should not be read in isolation and should be cross-referenced to other relevant policies and procedures, including:
- 6.6
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges - 2021
 - College Code of Conduct
 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - Cross College Tutorial Policy
 - Quiet Room Policy
 - Visiting Speakers and Fundraising Policy
 - Student Behaviour Policy
 - Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - General Data Protection Regulations Policy and Procedure

**TO BE READ WITH: CHILD PROTECTION: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY 2024-25
PART B**