Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner : Zubair Ahmad

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Address: 3rd Floor, 277 Cranbrook Road, IG1 4TG,
Ilford, England

Email: info@londoncollege.co.uk

Phone: +44 (0) 208 2617372

Web: https://londoncollege.co.uk/

Introduction

At AA London College, we are dedicated to empowering learners to shape their futures with confidence and ambition. Central to this mission is our unwavering commitment to safeguarding, and we regard the welfare of our learners as our highest priority.

We are committed to protecting **children, young people, and vulnerable adults** from harm. This policy

acknowledges our statutory safeguarding duties, including:

- **Working with other agencies** to safeguard and promote the welfare of children *(The Children Act 1989 and 2004)*.
- **Effective procedures** for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns *(Education Act 2002)*.
- **Staff legal responsibilities** in relation to under-18s *(Sexual Offences Act 2003, Serious Crime Act 2015, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)*.
- **Reporting allegations against staff and safer recruitment** *(Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)*.
- **Protecting students from radicalisation and extremism** *(Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, CONTEST 2018 and Prevent Duty Guidance 2023)*.
- **Compliance with data protection law** *(Data Protection Act 1998, GDPR 2016)*.

This policy has been developed with reference to *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*.

1. Principles

1.1 Everyone's responsibility

- All staff must be familiar with this policy and safeguarding procedures.
- All staff must remain alert to possible signs of abuse, self-harm, or disclosures from students.
- All staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct and demonstrate professional behaviour.
- All staff must complete mandatory safeguarding training, plus updates as required.

1.2 College responsibility

- The College will allocate sufficient resources to safeguard learners.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and trained Safeguarding Officers (SGOs) will ensure procedures are followed swiftly and effectively.

1.3 Prevent duty

- The College will take reasonable steps to prevent students from being drawn into terrorism.
- Staff and students will be given training on the government's Prevent Strategy.
- The College will actively work with other bodies, such as the local council and police, if intervention is necessary, especially in case of referrals and providing support through Channels referrals.
- Learners will be supported to build resilience, encourage debate, and promote shared values in line with the principles of Academic Freedom.

1.4 Data protection

- The College will process safeguarding data lawfully in line with GDPR.
- Confidentiality will be respected unless information must be shared to protect learners.

2. Definition of Safeguarding

2.1 Within AA London College, safeguarding means:

- Promoting the welfare of **children** (students under 18).
- Protecting **vulnerable adults** (normally students aged 18–25 with an EHC plan or specific learning difficulty).
- Preventing learners from being radicalised or drawn into terrorism/extremism.
- Protecting learners from child-on-child abuse or learner-on-learner abuse in case of adult learners.

2.2 Safeguarding cases involve situations requiring **multi-agency work** to protect learners at risk of significant harm.

- Behavioural issues alone will usually be managed internally through the Disciplinary Procedure and Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

2.3 We acknowledge that children or vulnerable adults may be **perpetrators as well as victims** of abuse.

3. Management and Monitoring

3.1 Governors

- Ensure the College meets statutory safeguarding duties.
- Review safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Monitor safeguarding data and reporting periodically.

3.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Keep safeguarding policies and procedures up to date.
- Co-ordinate with Safeguarding Officers and ensure cases are followed up.
- Act as the point of contact for external agencies.
- Produce an annual safeguarding self-assessment and action plan.
- Support curriculum delivery of safeguarding and Prevent.
- Represent AA London College at Safeguarding Partners meetings.
- Liaise with SMT if allegations are made against staff.
- Ensure safeguarding records are maintained in line with this policy.

3.3 Safeguarding Officers (SGOs)

- Provide advice and guidance to staff.
- Record and follow up safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Refer cases to external agencies where required.
- Monitor cases post-referral to ensure student safety.
- Keep records secure and issue privacy notices where relevant.
- Liaise with DSL on Prevent concerns or staff allegations.

3.4 Senior Management Team (SMT)

- Ensure all staff appointments are subject to **DBS checks**.
- Ensure DBS checks are renewed periodically, or immediately if staff roles change.
- Ensure mandatory safeguarding training is completed.
- Ensure procedures are followed if allegations are made against staff and notify the DSL, **Education & Skills Funding Agency**, and **Disclosure and Barring Service** where appropriate.

4. Record Keeping

- All safeguarding records will be stored **securely** and only accessed by the safeguarding team.
- Students involved in safeguarding processes will be issued with a **privacy notice** explaining how their data will be used.
- Safeguarding records will be kept for **7 years** after a learner leaves the College, after which they will be securely destroyed.

5. Keeping Children Safe

Child Protection - Child Protection is a key part of Safeguarding practice. Child protection refers to the mechanisms put in place to protect children who have already experienced harm, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or have otherwise been subject to significant harm. It is reactive in nature. Safeguarding refers to the proactive measures we take to prevent significant harm from happening to our students and staff.

All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of, '**it could happen here'**, where any safeguarding concern is raised. All students at the College must be able to place their trust and confidence in any member of staff working in the College. They must be encouraged to have the confidence and trust that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have, and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately. All staff must therefore know what to do if a student chooses to talk to them about any matter which raises child protection or safeguarding/welfare concerns.

All staff who receive a disclosure must:
● listen to what the student is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions
● respect the student's right to privacy but not promise confidentiality
● reassure the student that he/she has done the right thing in telling
● explain to the student that in order to keep him/her safe from harm the information that has been shared must be passed on
● report what has been disclosed, using agreed procedures, ideally to the DSL or the Safeguarding Officers if the DSL is not available immediately.
● promptly record all verbal conversations in writing, using the student's own words, signing and dating the record

Student Behaviour
We will always aim to maintain a safe, calm and respectful learning environment by expecting good behaviour from our students.
Any unwarranted physical response from a member of staff to a student's poor behaviour could lead to a child protection concern being raised by the student or parent/carer. The College employs staff trained in safe, appropriate physical intervention. No member of staff will use any physical intervention or undue force when dealing with a student's breach of our behaviour policy unless the potential consequences of not physically intervening are sufficiently serious to justify such action e.g. where not to physically intervene may result in a student being exposed to greater harm.

Bullying
We understand that bullying is harmful to students. Our Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy sets out our aim of fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable, and will always be challenged and addressed. We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include racist or homophobic behaviour. It may include discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, gender identity or pregnancy. Any such incident will be dealt with in accordance with our Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

E-Safety
We recognise that students' use of the internet is an important part of their education but that there are risks of harm associated with its use. When students use the College's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. All staff receive regular online training updates as required and at least annually.
However, many students are able to access the internet using their own data plan. We have an IT Use policy that addresses how we minimise those risks and how we teach students to stay safe when using the internet in their lives.

Health & Safety
We have a Health & Safety policy that demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to students when on the premises and when undertaking activities out of College under the supervision of our staff.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges.
All staff must be aware of the increased risk to students with SEND and the additional barriers that can exist when identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns. These can include:
● assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration

● these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
● the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs

● communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
● cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in College or the consequences of doing so.

All safeguarding and child protection cases concerning students with SEND must be dealt with sensitively and involve the DSL and the Principal.

6. Referrals to partner agencies

If we have a reason to be concerned about the welfare of a student we will always seek to discuss this with the student's parents/carers in the first instance, where it is appropriate to do so. On occasion, according to the nature of our concern, it may be necessary for us to make an immediate referral to Social Services through the MASH referral system when to do otherwise may put the student at risk of further harm either because of delay, or because of the actions of the parents/carers. The DSL and SOs will liaise with the Local Safeguarding Partnership as appropriate, and work with other agencies in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023.