

Annex to Safeguarding Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy

30 March 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the college's safeguarding policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the college and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

Reporting arrangements

The college arrangements continue in line with our safeguarding policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Alexis Smith alexis.smith@bcot.ac.uk
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DSLs are: Helen Key helen.key@bcot.ac.uk

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The College's approach ensures a DSL is always on site while the college is open.

Staff will continue to follow the safeguarding procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there

may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are to go through one of the DSLs

Should a child in the college's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the college will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure.

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children.

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children subject to a child protection plan
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker
- Children with an EHCP

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parent and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

Peer-on-peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed ages, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse in our remote learning curriculum.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The college may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the college.

- The college continues to ensure appropriate filters are in place where possible
- Smoothwall works on all the devices that we have issued for students to use at home.
- The college has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly. Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff have read the 20 Safeguarding concerns for livestreaming <https://static.lgfl.net/LgflNet/downloads/digisafe/Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf> prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the college, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents have been offered the following links (through the website):
 - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
 - [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

If necessary, the college will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.