



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure

Purpose and scope

Wyke Sixth Form College recognises that it has a statutory obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of its students. This document offers guidance and outlines procedures that should be followed in cases of suspected abuse and situations of serious risk involving 'vulnerable adults'. It applies to Wyke students aged 18 or over who meet the definition below and should be followed by all members of staff and volunteers.

Equality statement

This policy applies to all college staff regardless of age, race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other status. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equitable manner recognising any special needs where adjustments can be made. No individual will suffer any form of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying as a result of this policy.

Definitions

We are all potential victims of crime or abuse but certain conditions increase our vulnerability. The term '**vulnerable adult**' in this document is used to refer to any Wyke student aged 18 years and over who:

- Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health or other disability, age or illness and;
- Is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself; or
- Unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation

For the purpose of this policy and its attendant procedures, '**abuse**' of a vulnerable adult is defined as;

"...the physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological harm or neglect of a vulnerable person". (Multi-agency Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidelines for The Protection of Vulnerable Adults in the Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, 2001). See **Appendix 1**.

'**Significant harm**' refers to:

"...ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical); the impairment of or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development." (Law Commission, 1995).

Policy Guidelines

1. The government have set out key principles in its guidance document “No Secrets” (DOH, 2000) which state that, “the protection of vulnerable adults should always receive a high priority” and that “all agencies should be able to clearly demonstrate they are able to respond to abuse with prompt, timely and appropriate action”.
2. Within the College’s duty of care it has a responsibility to act if there is a cause for concern and to notify the appropriate agencies so that they can investigate and take any action. Thus the College has a responsibility to provide information to Social Services or other appropriate agencies, when the vulnerable adult requests it or the situation necessitates it. Although it is not the College’s responsibility to lead investigations of allegations or suspicions of abuse, the College will contribute to investigations made by the agency leading the investigation.
3. The College will ensure the vulnerable adult disclosing abuse is offered all possible support.
4. A nominated member of the Corporation and designated staff member (Safeguarding Designated Person, SDP) with responsibility for the protection of vulnerable adults will be appointed.
5. The College will provide appropriate staff training to ensure that staff are aware of the issue of protecting vulnerable adults from abuse and the procedures to follow
6. The College will review and monitor the policy and its procedures as set out below, working together with the local Adult Protection Committee.

Procedure

The aim of this procedure is to **prevent** the abuse of vulnerable adults and **support** individuals to come forward to report any suspected abuse.

1. When a student discloses to a member of college staff that abuse has taken place individual staff should:

- Listen
- Stay calm
- Take him/her seriously
- Ask clarification questions
- Inform him/her that they will need to tell someone else
- A member of staff should not question the student in depth. This is because asking leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations could jeopardise any criminal investigation that may follow.
- Re-assure the student that they are doing the right thing in telling but avoid making comments or judgements.

n.b. staff cannot make guarantees of confidentiality if the student is a ‘vulnerable adult’. If possible, they should warn the student about this before they disclose the abuse.

2. If the ‘vulnerable adult’ wishes to continue to disclose the abuse, the member of staff should:

- **Refer the ‘vulnerable adult’ to the Safeguarding Designated Person.**
- Inform them of the action that would follow the conversation and assure them that they will be kept informed of developments.
- Write down what the student has told them as soon as they can, using the student’s own words, including the time, the setting and names of those present and give this to the SDP.
- If the student volunteers the information, it is useful to record the general nature of the allegation, where and when it occurred, who was involved and if any other persons were present.
- This written account should be signed, timed and dated by the member of staff.

Individual staff should never deal with abuse disclosures in isolation and should always refer to the SDP with responsibility for ‘vulnerable adult’ protection. This is the only person who should make the decision whether or not to report suspected abuse to Social Services or the Police.

3. Once a referral is made to the SDP they will undertake the following:

3.1 Seek medical attention for the student if they are suffering from a serious injury.

3.2 Ask the student to repeat the disclosure they have made. The student will be asked if there are younger children or other vulnerable adults at risk but the SDP will avoid asking leading questions and will not attempt to investigate the allegations. A written account of the disclosure will be made and the student asked to sign it.

3.3 If the student wishes to take the allegation forward, the SDP will support the student in contacting Social Services, the Police, the NSPCC and College Counsellor.

3.4 When the student is not sure about taking the allegation forward, the SDP can, without necessarily identifying the person in question, discuss concerns with Social Services or the Police, so that an informed decision can be made.

3.5 Following consultation, the SDP will ask for the student’s views if it is clear that they can understand the significance and consequences of a referral. However, it remains the responsibility of the SDP to take whatever action is necessary to ensure the student’s safety (and that of any other children or ‘vulnerable adults’ who may be at risk).

3.6 Where practicable, concerns will be discussed with a parent or guardian unless this may place the student at risk of harm.

3.7 In the event of a decision to report, the SDP should inform the student of the proposed action and the reasons for this. This should happen before the referral (unless doing so would place the ‘vulnerable adult’ at further risk). The student should then be asked to give their written consent for information sharing by signing form APF1 (**Appendix 2**).

3.8 The SDP will contact the Social Services Department by telephone in the first instance and record the date and time that this took place. The CDP and

receiver of referral will agree what the student and parents will be told, by whom and when. The SDP will make a confirmation of the referral in writing within 48 hours, completing the referral form APF2a (**Appendix 3**).

3.9 All concerns, discussions, decisions made and reasons for those decisions will be recorded and stored in a secure location.

3.9.1 SDP will be the college contact if Social Services or the Police require further information about the student and if necessary, represent the College at multi-agency strategy decisions or protection conferences.

4. A review of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures and associated training will be conducted annually.

5. If the allegation is made against a senior post-holder at the College, i.e. the Principal, Deputy Principal the Director of Finance or the Clerk to the Corporation, the matter should be reported to the nominated Corporation member. Where the allegation is against a senior post-holder other than the Clerk to the Corporation, the nominated Corporation member should be contacted through the Clerk to the Corporation. Where the allegation is against the Clerk to the Corporation, the nominated Corporation member should be contacted through the Principal.

6. If the SDP (i.e. the Senior Tutor is the subject of the allegation, the matter should be reported to the nominated Corporation member, as detailed at 5. above, who will determine, in discussion with the Principal, how the procedures outlined in '3' above are to be followed. If the Principal is the subject of the allegation, the matter should be reported to the nominated Corporation member, as detailed at 5. above, who will determine, in discussion with the SDP, how the procedures outlined in '3' above are to be followed.

7. Safeguarding Designated Person is:

Senior Tutor

The College Counsellor, works to the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice and, whilst respecting the confidentiality of the student, she will work with him/her towards increased safety and disclosure where appropriate. The Counsellor has information about and contact details of other support agencies.

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Appendix 1

Types of abuse

Physical abuse - such as hitting, pushing, shaking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse – including rape or assault or sexual acts to which a vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent.

Financial or material abuse – such as theft, fraud, exploitation, the misuse of possessions or benefits and pressure applied in relation to financial transactions.

Emotional or psychological abuse – such as threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, intimidation, coercion, verbal or racist abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Discriminatory Abuse – that is based on a person's disability including harassment

Neglect and Acts of Omission - is where a person with care responsibilities allows a vulnerable adult to suffer unnecessarily in some way including ignoring medical or physical care needs or failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care services.