



Safeguarding of Adults at Risk - Policy

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16/03/2026	31/09/2026
Policy Owner	Policy Director Lead
Head of Safeguarding and Governance	Director of Education

Contents

1: Policy Introduction

1.1: Named Safeguarding Personnel

2: Policy

2.1: We Will – Senior Leaders in the College and Designated Safeguarding Leads

2.2: You Will

3: Adults With Specific Vulnerabilities

4: Colleagues who work in more than one setting

5: Safer Working Practices

6: Monitoring and Compliance

7: Related Legislation and Guidance

8: Other Policy References

9: Training Consideration

10: Associated Documents

11: Appendices



Printed on: _____ (Date) By: _____ (Name)

Signature: _____

1 Policy Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As an organisation, the Hesley Group is committed to ensuring compliance with best practice across all safeguarding standards and guidance. Mercury College's safeguarding policy is written in line with these principles and is specifically designed to support safe and effective practice within the College.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Mercury College and all colleagues safeguard the welfare of students who may be at risk. This includes recognising the signs of abuse or neglect, responding appropriately to allegations or concerns, and ensuring that students feel safe, respected and heard.

Mercury College is committed to maintaining a safeguarding culture in which the welfare, safety, dignity and voice of every student is paramount. Safeguarding is not solely the prevention of abuse; it is a whole-organisational responsibility that requires professional curiosity, early intervention, open communication, multi-agency working, and an unwavering commitment to the principle that *"it could happen here."*

All colleagues, volunteers, contractors and visitors are expected to uphold this culture by remaining vigilant, reporting concerns promptly, and respecting the rights and wishes of students. Decisions will always be made in the best interests of those we support.

We actively promote a person-centred approach to safeguarding, ensuring that each student's views, needs and lived experiences shape our safeguarding responses and actions.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Mercury College Safeguarding of Adults at Risk – Guidance, P&S 2.1.1.

1.1 Named Safeguarding Personnel

Mercury College maintains clear lines of accountability for safeguarding. The following personnel hold designated responsibilities:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**
Victoria Sulston – Deputy Head of Education
Direct Line: 01709 861663
Mobile: 07483958680
Email: Victoria.sulston@mercurycollege.co.uk
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs):**
Caroline Richardson - Acting Head of Education
Direct line: 01709 861663
Mobile: 07717378097
Email: caroline.richardson@mercurycollege.co.uk

Laura Taylor – Head of Education
Direct line: 01709 861663
Mobile: 07384 253700
Email: laura.taylor@mercurycollege.co.uk



Danielle Sidall
Direct Line: 01709 861663
Mobile: 07825236960
Email: danielle.sidall@mercurycollege.co.uk

- **Director of Education:**
Responsible for strategic oversight of safeguarding across the College.

Fenella Dowler-Luke - Director of Education
Direct Line: 01709 861663
Mobile: 07767116290
Email: Fenella.dowler-luke@mercurycollege.co.uk

- **Group Head of Safeguarding & Governance:**
Provides organisational safeguarding oversight and quality assurance.

Maryann Barton – Head of Safeguarding and Governance
Direct Line: 01302 866906 ex 1132
Email: Maryann.barton@hesleygroup.co.uk

All safeguarding contacts will be displayed prominently around the college and within colleagues and student information materials.

2 Policy

It is Mercury College's policy to ensure all of the students who learn with us are supported to live lives free from abuse and fear of aggression and violence.

Mercury College follows the principles of making safeguarding personal. The core principles for safeguarding vulnerable adults are empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability. Making safeguarding personal supports translating those principles into effective practice.

Mercury College works in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to uphold this right and to ensure people who attend the college are protected from harm, abuse or exploitation at all times.

Mercury College has safe recruitment procedures in place to ensure that people who use our services, families and stakeholders can be sure that our colleagues have been vetted according to current best practice.

2.1 We Will – Senior Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Lead's

- Operate Mercury College in a way that proactively prevents harm and promotes a safe, open and respectful environment.
- Listen to students without judgement and ensure their views inform safeguarding decisions.
- Maintain clear safeguarding arrangements, including policies, procedures, codes of conduct, named DSLs and access to Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- Ensure robust prevention systems such as safer recruitment, risk assessments and induction processes.
- Promote a culture of transparency, duty of candour and professional curiosity where all concern, including low-level concerns are reported and taken seriously.



- Provide and oversee mandatory safeguarding, Prevent and online safety training, ensuring regular updates for all colleagues.
- Ensure all students, colleagues, visitors and contractors know how to raise concerns safely, including anonymously.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken for any concern, including referrals to statutory services, internal investigations, and colleague conduct management.
- Maintain secure and accurate safeguarding records, share information appropriately and ensure learning from cases informs future practice.
- Work collaboratively with external partners (e.g., social care, police, health) to protect students and support effective safeguarding outcomes.
- Provide effective oversight, supervision and support to colleagues and managers regarding safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure safeguarding information and policies remain accessible and visible, including on the College website.

2.2 You Will

Managers will:

- Ensure colleagues complete and maintain mandatory safeguarding, Prevent and online safety training and understand the policy, guidance and Code of Conduct.
- Discuss safeguarding routinely in supervision to ensure colleagues understand their responsibilities and know how to report concerns.
- Make referrals to police or social care when required by the DSL and continue to liaise with agencies throughout the process.
- Promote Making Safeguarding Personal by ensuring student views and wishes are considered.
- Maintain accurate, timely safeguarding records on Ulysses and ensure information is shared appropriately.
- Ensure safeguarding guidance is visible and accessible for students, colleagues, visitors and contractors.
- Promote an open, honest culture of duty of candour and ensure safeguarding is a standing agenda item in team meetings.

All colleagues will:

- Maintain up-to-date safeguarding, Prevent and online safety training and understand their individual responsibilities.
- Read and understand the Safeguarding Policy, associated Guidance, KCSIE Part 1 and the Code of Conduct.
- Recognise and report all concerns—including low-level concerns—to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.
- Listen to students without judgement, support them to express their concerns and act in their best interests at all times.
- Escalate concerns about safety or wellbeing promptly and follow reporting procedures without delay.
- Maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices, including appropriate use of technology.
- Provide a safe learning environment and report any issues or risks immediately to a manager or DSL.
- Seek advice or clarification from their manager or DSL whenever unsure about a safeguarding situation.

3 Adults with Specific Vulnerabilities

This section outlines additional factors that may make a student more vulnerable to abuse or neglect and should be read alongside the College's Prevent, online safety and PBS frameworks.

Safeguarding practice at Mercury College acknowledges that adults may experience a wide range of circumstances that increase their vulnerability to harm. Colleagues must be aware of and responsive to these factors, which may include:

- A history of being in care or involvement with children's social care
- Disabilities, sensory impairments or communication needs that affect the ability to recognise or report abuse
- Mental health needs or emotional distress
- Cognitive or learning differences that impact decision-making or risk awareness
- Experiences of trauma, bereavement, abuse or adverse childhood experiences
- Dependence on others for personal care or daily support

Colleagues must adapt their communication, support approaches and reporting practices to ensure that all learners' needs are understood, and they are kept safe at all times.

Mental health needs may significantly increase an adult's vulnerability to abuse, exploitation or neglect. Colleagues must consider the impact of anxiety, depression, trauma, self-harm, emotional dysregulation and other conditions when assessing risk and supporting students to communicate concerns.

4 Colleagues who work in more than one Hesley Group setting

Some of our students live or receive support from another Hesley Group adult service and may be supported in education by the colleagues who work with them in their home.

All colleagues who work and support individuals within the college are subjected to a robust recruitment process, which meets the requirements of our education setting, and receive induction and ongoing training in relation to working within Mercury College.

All colleagues who work within Mercury College will receive this policy and the appropriate support and guidance to ensure that they understand it and that they are able to report a concern appropriately.

Concerns raised during the college day or in relation to the college are reported and managed by the College Designated Safeguarding Lead; relevant safeguarding information is always shared between the Head of Education and the Registered Manager of a service to ensure that learners are protected both within the college and at home. Further information in relation to the reporting of concerns is detailed within the guidance associated with this policy.

5 Safer Working Practices

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners, all colleagues must adhere to safer working practices including:

- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries at all times
- Using only College-approved devices for photographs, recordings or educational activities
- Ensuring that personal mobile phones are stored securely and are not used in the presence of learners



- Ensuring communications with learners are appropriate, professional and conducted only through agreed channels
- Respecting learner privacy, dignity and confidentiality in line with policy and legal requirements

Any concerns relating to breaches of safe working practice must be reported immediately.

6 Monitoring and Compliance

Safeguarding at Mercury College is overseen through a clear governance and quality assurance structure. The Head of Safeguarding and Governance and Executive Team maintain oversight of all reported safeguarding concerns, with the Head of Safeguarding and Governance providing advice, guidance and specialist support where required.

Safeguarding governance is delivered through the Mercury College Quality Governance Framework, which outlines the systems, standards and responsibilities that underpin Corp 1.1.1MC.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding and Governance in collaboration with the Director of Education. The review process is scrutinised by the Education Board and formally approved by the Chief Executive Officer to ensure the policy remains current, robust and compliant with statutory requirements.

The Education Board and Director of Education provide strategic oversight of safeguarding practice across the College. Their responsibilities include ensuring compliance with statutory guidance, reviewing safeguarding performance, commissioning and reviewing annual safeguarding audits, and ensuring adequate resources for safeguarding leadership, training and operational support.

Safeguarding practice at Mercury College is rooted in effective multi-agency collaboration. Colleagues and leaders work with local authority safeguarding teams, health services, police, education partners, housing providers and voluntary sector organisations to ensure coordinated support, risk management and positive outcomes for students.

The College also uses appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems to safeguard students when accessing digital platforms. Colleagues must report any digital safety concerns identified through monitoring alerts, student disclosures or observations.

7 Related Legislation and Guidance

The Care Act 2014 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance (most recently updated 2023) set out the legal duties for all organisations involved in adult safeguarding. This includes the requirement to follow the six safeguarding principles (empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability) and to ensure that adults with care and support needs are protected from abuse and neglect.

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) outlines that all people should be deemed as having capacity until found not to; the aim of this act is to protect and restore power to adults who may have reduced capacity to make decisions for themselves.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) is legislation created so employers are able to proactively safeguard those under their care by checking against a barred list and police record if a potential colleague would be suitable from a safeguarding perspective.

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) ensures there must be procedures in place to prevent those accessing the adult services from being abused by others, as well as stating there needs to be processes in place should abuse happen.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 sets out the legal duties that must be followed to safeguard and promote young people in college. All colleagues at the college, relevant senior managers and Hesley Group as the proprietor must read and understand the guidance to ensure that Mercury College is operating in line with its legal duties.

Mercury College manages all safeguarding information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR). Information will only be shared where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect an individual from harm.

8 Other Policy References

All colleagues, visitors and contractors are encouraged to raise concerns should they have them.

We have a speaking up policy in place to support colleagues to speak up should they witness something that leaves them feeling concerned. Further information is available within our speaking up policy. Corp 5.1. As part of this policy, Hesley Group has commissioned Safecall to provide a confidential and anonymous whistle blowing hotline.

Safecall can be contacted on **0800 9151571** or at www.safecall.co.uk/report

All colleagues are directed to work in a manner that is open and honest, which is implemented from their induction and encouraged during supervision and training, as stated in the Being Open – Duty of Candour Policy Corp 8.1.

There is a robust recruitment policy and a range of supporting policies in place which includes safer recruitment good practice.

- Safer Recruitment Policy Per 2.1
- Employment of Relatives Per 2.4
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks on Potential and Current Colleagues Per 2.5.

Colleagues are made aware of how to conduct themselves throughout their time of employment; whilst on induction, on training and during supervisions. All colleagues receive their own copy of our Code of Conduct for Colleagues Policy, Per 4.9.

Colleagues found to be working in breach of this policy (or other Hesley Group or Mercury college policies) may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

The welfare and safety of all people at Mercury College is a priority, all colleagues, visitors and contractors should be aware of the health and safety arrangements within the college. Further information can be found within our Health and Safety Policy, H&S 1.1 and our Visitors to Services Policy, P&S 2.2.

All learners will be supported by colleagues via a Positive Behaviour Support approach (PBS); the aim of this way of working is to support learners in a person-centred manner to reduce behaviour that could cause negative impacts upon themselves and their peers whilst promoting more positive outcomes, see Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Policy P&S 5.1A.



Colleagues and learners are supported to access and use technology at the college, our Media and E-safety policy [P&S 6.17](#) and Acceptable use of IT Facilities and Social Media policy [Fac 5.1](#) outline our approach and how we keep people safe when accessing technology and the internet.

9 Training Consideration

All colleagues will receive our mandatory safeguarding training upon their induction, College colleagues receive a range of training as well as annual refreshers on a range of safeguarding topics including prevent and online safety.

All colleagues are expected to hold or be working towards a qualification that is suitable for their role.

Designated Safeguarding leads and their deputies will complete advanced safeguarding training to support them in their role.

All colleagues working at Mercury College will be supported to read Keeping children safe in Education part one. Members of the Executive team, as the college's governing body, will be supported to read keeping children safe in Education part two.

10 Associated Documents

- 10.1 Mercury College Safeguarding of Adults at Risk – Guidance, P&S 2.1.2MC
- 10.2 Adult safeguarding Booklet, P&S 2.1.1
- 10.3 Keeping Safe from Abuse – Easy read, P&S 2.1.11
- 10.3 Guidance on Extremism and Radicalisation – PREVENT, P&S 2.1.12

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Speaking Up - Policy, Corp 5.1
- 11.2 Being Open – Duty of Candour - Policy, Corp 8.1
- 11.3 Safer Recruitment Policy, Per 2.1
- 11.4 Obtaining and Providing References for Employees and Prospective Employees - Policy, Per 2.3
- 11.5 Employment of Relatives - Policy, Per 2.4
- 11.6 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks on Potential and Current Colleagues - Policy, Per 2.5
- 11.7 Disciplinary Procedures - Policy, Per 4.1
- 11.8 Code of Conduct for Colleagues - Policy, Per 4.9
- 11.9 Visitors to Services - Policy, P&S 2.2





11.10 Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) – Policy, P&S 5.1A

11.11 DBS Referrals - Form and Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>

11.12 Doncaster Council Safeguarding Adults:

[Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures - City of Doncaster Council](#)

