Barking & Dagenham College

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Author:	Director of Student Welfare and Support (DSL)	Date of Approval:	August 2025
Approved By:	SLT Policy Committee	Reviewed:	Annually

OUR VISION

To be an exceptional college

OUR MISSION

Empowering futures, transforming lives

OUR CULTURE AND VALUES

Barking & Dagenham College is a unique, diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone is supported to grow, develop and really flourish.

We treat each student as an individual because we know that everyone is different. Every individual has their own unique talents, circumstances, challenges and aspirations. Every student brings something special and it is this diversity and richness of ideas that makes College life interesting, fun and vibrant. Our culture is such that all students, staff and visitors should feel welcome, safe and valued. Guided by our principles of honesty, integrity and transparency, we treat each other respectfully and seek to establish trust. By building resilience and confidence, we encourage students and staff to rise above challenges with determination and a positive mindset.

Whilst we are rightly proud of our unique internal culture, Barking & Dagenham College is an outward facing organisation that recognises the critical importance of working through networks and collaboration to lead change and influence local agendas. By partnering with industry-leading employers and embracing innovation, digital technologies and new ways of thinking, we strive to push the boundaries of learning and ensure that our students are ahead of the curve. Our many stakeholder partnerships mean that we have established our place at the heart of our community and as a key partner in the regeneration of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

At Barking & Dagenham College, we are dedicated to inspiring students and staff to embrace challenges and pursue their dreams with confidence. Most of all, we are ambitious and we expect excellence - from ourselves and from our students.

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1 Essential Contact Details for professionals & parents.

If you believe a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger (including risk of suicide), call 999 (or 112 outside the UK). During college hours, contact the Safeguarding Officer on duty via Main Reception 020 8090 3020 or email safeguarding@bdc.ac.uk. The DSL team maintains the full, named contact list (DSL, Deputies, Safeguarding Officers, Governor leads) on InfoPoint; it is reviewed termly and immediately on staff changes. External multi-agency and LADO details for our local authorities are also listed on InfoPoint and in staff rooms.

1.1 Key Internal Contact Details

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Anthony Brathwaite	anthony.brathwaite@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 7196
Deputy DSL and Safeguarding Coordinator	Michelle Coleman	michelle.coleman@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0172
Safeguarding Officer and Care Education Coordinator	Kuburat Tijani	kuburat.tijani@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0442
Safeguarding Officer and Senior Counsellor	Carmel Lynch	carmel.lynch@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0488
Safeguarding Officer and Counsellor	Matthew Waller	matthew.waller@g.bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0488
Safeguarding Officer and Director of IT	Andrew Keegan	andrew.keegan@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0133
Safeguarding Officer and LRC Coordinator	Claire Cockburn	claire.cockburn@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0100
Safeguarding Officer and Welfare and Achievement Manager	Gill Yates	gill.yates@bdc.ac.uk
Safeguarding Officer and Welfare and Achievement Manager	Lisa Nickleson	Lisa.nickelson@bdc.ac.uk
Deputy DSL and Student Liaison Officer	Junior Grey	junior.grey@bdc.ac.uk 0203 667 0406
Governor Safeguarding Leads	Carole Ditty Bal Panesar	carole.ditty@bdc.ac.uk Balbinder.panesar@bdc.ac.uk

1.2 Key External Contact Details

Service	Contact Details
Barking, Havering & Redbridge Mental Health Crisis Line	0800 995 1000
Childline	0800 1111
Samaritans	116 123
London Regional PREVENT Coordinator	Jennie Fisher jennie.fisher@education.gov.uk 07880 469588
London Regional PREVENT Coordinator	0800 789321
LB Barking & Dagenham Prevent Team	prevent@lbbd.gov.uk
National Prevent Line	0800 011 3764
Safer Neighborhoods Team	PS Chris Dwyer (Heath & Eastbrook & Rush Green Wards) Christopher.Dwyer@met.police.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Mike Cullern mike.cullern@lbbd.gov.uk 020 8227 3934
Barking & Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board	lscb@lbbd.gov.uk
LB Barking & Dagenham MASH	0208 227 3811
LB Havering MASH	01708 433222
LB Redbridge MASH	0208 708 3885
LB Newham MASH	0203 373 4600
LB Tower Hamlets MASH	0207 364 3444
Thurrock MASH	01375 652802
Essex MASH	0345 603 7627
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Introduction / Context

Barking & Dagenham College (BDC) regards the welfare of our learners as our highest priority. This policy explains how we safeguard and promote the welfare of children (all under-18s) and vulnerable adults in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). It applies to all BDC activities, including apprenticeships, work-based/off-site learning, subcontracted and alternative provision, and any activities with children on our premises outside normal hours.

2.2 Principles / Purpose

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We maintain a child-centred, coordinated approach and expect:

- All staff should be familiar with this policy and with the procedures by which we report and manage safeguarding concerns.
- All staff should be receptive to any disclosures from students, and alert to possible signs of abuse or self-harm.
- All staff should be alert to early indicators of safeguarding concerns, such as persistent absence, and report concerns about students as soon as they emerge, so that appropriate help and support can be provided.
- All staff should be familiar with the Staff Code of Conduct and demonstrate high standards in their professional behaviours.
- All staff must complete mandatory safeguarding training, complete updates and attend additional safeguarding related training as required.
- All staff are required to read and maintain a good working knowledge of Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1.

The college will allocate sufficient resources to promote the welfare and safety of its students.

- The college will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL (DDSL) and volunteer Safeguarding Officers who are all trained to the same standard, to ensure that our safeguarding processes are applied swiftly and effectively.

The college will take all reasonable steps to prevent its students from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism:

- The college recognises the positive contribution it can make towards protecting its students from radicalisation and violent extremism. The college will continue to empower its students to create communities that are resilient to extremism and protecting the wellbeing of particular students who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism or crime.
- The college will seek to ensure that all its staff and students have a clear understanding of the government's Prevent strategy, and how it affects them.

- The college will share information to facilitate multi-agency intervention if this is deemed necessary to protect students from radicalisation and violent extremism.
- Any Prevent concerns will be reported via the Safeguarding procedures.

The college will comply with all current data protection legislation.

- The college will ensure that all student data in relation to safeguarding is processed in a lawful manner.
- The college will seek to maintain student confidentiality wherever possible, but will always prioritise the sharing of information when this is deemed necessary to keep students safe.

2.3 Scope / Definition of safeguarding

This policy covers: children (under 18), and vulnerable adults (typically 18–25 with an Education, Health and Care plan or other vulnerabilities).

We also recognise our responsibilities towards children attending out of school clubs and events on BDC premises.

Staff understand the four areas of need: help and support as problems emerge; protection from maltreatment; prevention of impairment of health/development; and safe, effective care that enables best outcomes. While we do not have a specific safeguarding duty of care to adults in general, we do offer support, advice and guidance to adults, and will signpost them to external services where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns for children will be managed and reported according to the guidance set out in KCSIE and Working Together to Safeguard Children. Safeguarding concerns for vulnerable adults will be managed according to adult safeguarding principles and reported to Adult Services.

Concerns taken forward as safeguarding cases are likely to be issues where multi- agency work is required in order to protect children or vulnerable adults who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (whether on or off college premises). Cases are unlikely to be taken forward as safeguarding where they relate to student behavioural issues which can be addressed internally via the Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy.

We always work on the assumption that children or vulnerable adults may be the perpetrators, as well as the victims, of abuse.

Students who are on work placements, and have a concern related to their workplace, should follow the local safeguarding policies and procedures of those settings.

2.4 Management and oversight of safeguarding

The College operates a Safeguarding, Prevent, Personal Development and Welfare Group (SPPDW), which is chaired by the CEO/Principal and includes representation from Curriculum, Business Support, Governors and students. This group meets regularly to discuss key safeguarding and pastoral issues, review the effectiveness of the College's safeguarding strategies and practices, and monitor progress against the safeguarding action plan.

It is the responsibility of the Governors to:

- Ensure that the college meets its statutory duties to promote and safeguard the welfare of its students
- Review and approve any amendments to safeguarding policies, procedures and the Annual Report
- Regularly monitor and review the data and reporting in relation to safeguarding
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training (including compliance with KCSIE) and any additional training that is deemed necessary for them to carry out their responsibilities in regards to safeguarding
- Appoint a Governor Safeguarding Lead(s) to ensure oversight and scrutiny of the relevant policies, procedures and practice on behalf of the Board, regularly meet with the DSL and represent Governors at College SPPDW Strategy Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to:

- Ensure the college policy and procedures are up to date and reflect current legislation and statutory guidance
- Co-ordinate the team of/Deputy DSLs/ Safeguarding Officers to ensure that procedures are followed, cases are correctly reported and followed up, and specialist staff are always available during term times to deal with safeguarding incidents
- Act as the gatekeeper for safeguarding information requests from external agencies
- Produce an annual self-assessment review of safeguarding practice and accompanying action plan.
- Work with staff across the college to support the promotion of safeguarding and Prevent in the curriculum.
- Act as the representative of the College at local Safeguarding Children Partnership Delivery Group meetings.
- Liaise with colleagues to ensure appropriate representation at meetings with external agencies.
- Liaise with the Principal and HR team in the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff, and inform the Designated Officer for LBBD, the Disclosure and Barring Service, and the Teaching Regulation Agency where appropriate.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are kept securely for the period specified in this policy.
- Refresh DSL training at least every two years.

- Meet regularly with the Link Governors for Safeguarding

It is the responsibility of the Deputy DSLs to:

- Provide professional advice, support and guidance to staff in relation to safeguarding or prevent.
- Ensure that all concerns and safeguarding cases which are referred to them are correctly reported, and followed up promptly.
- Make referrals to external agencies as required.
- Continue to monitor cases after referral to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to keep students safe.
- Ensure that records of safeguarding cases are stored securely.
- Issue a privacy notice to students who are subject to our safeguarding procedures.
- Liaise with the DSL regarding any concerns about radicalisation or any allegations made against staff.
- Refresh DSL training at least every two years

It is the responsibility of the HR / Staff Development team to:

- Ensure that all staff appointments are made subject to DBS checks and best practice in Safer Recruitment.
- Ensure that staff DBS checks are periodically renewed.
- Ensure that all staff complete mandatory training in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure that all staff are given regular and appropriate training in Safeguarding and Prevent via the college Staff Learning and Development programme.
- Ensure that correct procedures are adhered to if an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- The recruitment process also includes reference checks, structured interviews, identity verification, and consistent shortlisting procedures to ensure safer recruitment.
- Ensure that a confidential log is kept of low-level concerns.

2.5 Information sharing and confidentiality

We follow national guidance on information sharing. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent sharing information to keep children safe. Staff must record concerns on CPOMS and share them with the DSL/DDSL promptly, involving only those who need to know. We obtain and retain only what is necessary, accurate, timely and secure.

2.6 Record Keeping

- Content: each record includes a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

- Security: child protection records are restricted to the Safeguarding Team and kept separately from the learner file.
- Transfer: where a child transfers, the DSL ensures secure transfer of the child protection file with confirmation of receipt within 5 days (in-year) or within the first 5 days of the new term.
- Retention: safeguarding records are retained for 7 years unless otherwise required. Allegations about staff are retained until normal pension age or 10 years from the allegation (whichever is longer); malicious/false outcomes are removed unless the individual agrees retention.

2.7 Review

This policy will be periodically monitored in light of legislative, regulatory, codifiable of necessary changes, and in any event formally reviewed, and revised, if necessary, on an annual basis in July/August.

2.8 Linked Policies

- Prevent; Staff Code of Conduct
- Low Level Concern Policy (Feb 2025)
- Student Behaviour & Disciplinary
- DBS Checks
- Recruitment & Selection (Safer Recruitment)
- Data Protection; Whistleblowing
- Staff Disciplinary
- Fair Chance; Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Freedom of Speech & External Speakers
- Health & Safety; Educational Visits
- SEND; Work Experience
- Admissions
- Online Learning Protocol
- ILCT
- Alternative Provision & Off-site Learning.
- UK GDPR
- Social media policy

3 Procedures for college staff.

3.1 How Students Disclose

Learners may disclose to any trusted adult. Staff must listen carefully, avoid leading questions, not promise confidentiality, explain what will happen next, and reassure the learner that they have done the right thing. Staff must inform the duty Safeguarding Officer/DSL immediately via conversation (phone/Teams/in person) and record on CPOMS as soon as possible using the learner's own words where feasible.

3.2 How to report a safeguarding concern.

- Recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (including CSE/CCE, serious youth violence, radicalisation, domestic abuse, FGM, online harms).
- Discuss promptly with the duty Safeguarding Officer/DSL; do not delay action if the DSL is temporarily unavailable take appropriate steps and inform the DSL as soon as practicable.
- Record the concern and any immediate actions on CPOMS, attaching relevant evidence (screenshots, photos, chronology).
- Out-of-hours: if there is imminent risk, call emergency services. Otherwise, report to the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 Procedures for Safeguarding Officers (SGOs/DSL/DDSL)

- Hold a professional discussion with the referrer and the learner as appropriate; consider Early Help; take advice from MASH/Children's Services as required.
- Make timely referrals to Local Authority Children's Social Care and/or Police; Prevent concerns follow the safeguarding route with advice from the Prevent team.
- Under-18s: Inform parents/carers unless doing so places the child at further risk or undermines a criminal investigation.
- Adults with SEN/Disabilities: follow Care Act principles (Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership, Accountability) and the person's wishes where possible.
- Looked-After/Previously Looked-After: inform the Social Worker and liaise with the Virtual School Head; consider educational impact and support plan.
- Record all actions/decisions on CPOMS; monitor and escalate if the situation does not improve (local escalation procedures).

3.4 Whistleblowing

All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the College's safeguarding arrangements. Staff can raise concerns with the DSL or Director of Student Welfare & Support in the first instance; if unresolved, with the Principal or through the Whistleblowing Policy. The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is also available.

3.5 Ex-offender risk management (students and staff)

BDC welcomes applications from ex-offenders and manages risk proportionately through the Fair Chance process (students) and HR risk assessments (staff) in line with DBS policy and relevant law. Some courses require an enhanced DBS; applicants must check sector suitability before enrolment.

3.6 Subcontracted partners, alternative provision & off-site activity

- Due diligence: partners delivering on our behalf must have compliant safeguarding policies and safer recruitment; we obtain and retain assurance.
- On-site delivery: partners follow BDC safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the BDC Safeguarding Team immediately.
- Off-site/community delivery: partners act on concerns per their procedures and inform BDC promptly; BDC retains oversight.
- Alternative Provision: BDC remains responsible for safeguarding; we obtain written confirmation of staff checks and review placements at least half-termly (immediately if concerns arise).

3.7 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Recognise additional barriers (assumptions, communication barriers, increased isolation/bullying, difficulties recognising/communicating abuse).
- Coordinate between DSL and SEND teams; provide reasonable adjustments and communication support.
- Ensure accessible reporting systems and tailored support for victims and alleged perpetrators with SEND.

3.8 Sexual harassment and sexual violence (child-on-child)

We operate a zero-tolerance approach. We recognise that absence of reports does not mean it is not happening. We follow KCSIE Part 5 when responding to reports, including risk assessments, safeguarding and disciplinary measures, support for victims and alleged perpetrators, and ongoing review. Preventative education on healthy relationships, consent, respect and online safety is delivered via tutorials and curriculum.

3.9 Online Safety

- 4Cs: content, contact, conduct, commerce — used to structure risk assessment and curriculum.
- Roles: DSL leads online safety; Director of IT owns technical controls; Governor provides strategic challenge and assurance.

- Filtering & monitoring: systems proportionately limit exposure to harmful/inappropriate material; we conduct an annual review against DfE standards; leaders understand the provision and escalation; avoid over-blocking.
- Generative AI: we follow DfE product safety expectations and ensure filtering/monitoring addresses associated risks.
- Remote education: we follow DfE guidance; staff and learners use approved platforms; conduct and privacy expectations apply.

3.10 Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health problems can, in some cases, indicate that a child is suffering or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All staff are well-placed to observe changes in behaviour or presentation. Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must speak to the DSL immediately. The College provides access to counselling and external support and co-ordinates with health partners as appropriate

3.11 On-site children's clubs and sporting activities/ use of premises.

When facilities are hired to third parties for activities involving children, safeguarding requirements are included in hire/lease agreements: providers must have appropriate policies, safer recruitment, and arrangements to liaise with the College; failure to comply may result in termination of the agreement. Allegations about on-site coaches or volunteers are reported to the LADO.

3.12 Children Absent from Education

- Persistent and/or repeated absence can be a vital indicator of abuse or exploitation; we act early and liaise with the Local Authority.
- We seek to hold more than one emergency contact for every learner under 18, where reasonably possible.
- Attendance is monitored and informs safeguarding risk assessments.

3.13 Work experience, host families (homestay and private fostering)

- Work experience: assess whether supervisors of under-16s require barred list checks based on frequency and supervision; for 16–17s in specified places, consider enhanced checks.
- Homestay: follow suitability checks for UK host families and liaise with partners abroad; set clear expectations and supervision.
- Private fostering: where we become aware of a private fostering arrangement (child under 16 or under 18 with a disability living with someone not a close relative for 28+ days), we notify the Local Authority as soon as possible.

3.14 Safer Recruitment

- Shortlisting: obtain self-declarations on relevant matters from shortlisted candidates; conduct proportionate online searches.
- Pre-appointment: verify identity; enhanced DBS (with barred list where engaging in regulated activity); right to work; professional qualifications; prohibition from teaching; section 128 (where relevant); mental/physical fitness; overseas checks as appropriate; consider the DBS Update Service.
- Agency/third-party staff: obtain written confirmation that required checks have been completed; verify identity on arrival; obtain copy of DBS where disclosed information is indicated.
- Contractors/visitors: risk-based checking; ensure supervision as required; always verify identity on arrival.
- Volunteers: complete written risk assessments; obtain DBS (and barred list where unsupervised regulated activity) as appropriate; do not leave unchecked volunteers unsupervised.

3.15 Single Central Record (SCR)

- We maintain an SCR covering staff and agency/third-party supply staff (and, where applicable, proprietor body).
- Minimum fields recorded: identity; separate children's barred list check (if undertaken); enhanced DBS (with barred list where applicable) – requested/certificate date; prohibition from teaching; right to work; qualifications (where required); further checks for those who have lived or worked overseas; section 128 for relevant roles; date of each check and who carried it out.
- Information is removed from the SCR when individuals leave; documents are retained/handled per DPA 2018/UK GDPR.

3.16 Staff Training, induction and awareness

- Induction: all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) and are provided with Part 1 of KCSIE (or Annex A where appropriate) and this policy; they are informed of the DSL/DDSL identities and reporting systems.
- Updates: at least annually (and more frequently as required) via briefings /e-bulletins/meetings; staff are given opportunities to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements.
- Specialist training: DSL/DDSLs update their knowledge regularly; governors receive safeguarding/online safety training at induction and periodically.

3.17 Low-Level Concerns and adults (LLC)

BDC operates a separate Low Level Concern Policy (Feb 2025) detailing definitions, examples, reporting routes (including self-referral), recording, confidentiality and pattern analysis. All staff must share any concern—no matter how small—about adult behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct but does not meet the harm threshold. The DSL/HR records all LLCs, analyses for patterns, informs the principal, and notifies supply/contractors' employers where relevant. LLCs are not included in references unless they constitute misconduct or poor performance.

3.18 Allegations about staff, supply volunteers or contractors – harm threshold (Part 4)

- Report immediately to the principal (or Chair of Governors if the principal is implicated). The principal acts as case manager and consults the LADO without delay.
- Initial response: consider child welfare first; undertake basic fact-finding that does not jeopardise police/social care enquiries; agree next steps with the LADO.
- Consider confidentiality/reporting restrictions; manage communications and press interest appropriately.
- Outcome definitions: substantiated; false; malicious; unfounded; unsubstantiated. Decisions and rationale are recorded.
- Consider alternatives to suspension and document decisions; provide welfare support to the person subject of the allegation.
- Referrals: make a DBS referral when criteria are met and consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency for teachers, including agency staff.
- Record keeping: retain records until normal pension age or 10 years (whichever longer); remove malicious/false outcomes unless agreed for retention; consider lessons learned.

3.19 Children with a social worker, looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The DSL holds and uses the flag that a learner has a social worker to inform decisions about attendance/escalation and support. For looked-after and previously looked-after children, staff understand legal status, contact arrangements and delegated authority; the DSL has the social worker's details and the Virtual School Head's contact, and works to promote educational achievement and safety.

3.20 Gender Questioning Children

When supporting a gender questioning child, we take a cautious, safeguarding-led approach, consider broader vulnerabilities and any available clinical advice, and work in partnership with parents/carers unless doing so would present a significant risk of harm. We will signpost updated DfE guidance when published and ensure anti-bullying measures and support are in place.

4 Linked Policies:

- Low Level Concern Policy (Feb 2025)
- Staff Code of Conduct (Sept 2024)
- DBS Checks Policy (Aug 2024)

All recruitment processes comply with the DBS Checks Policy (Aug 2024), including mandatory enhanced DBS checks for all staff, contractors, and volunteers. Barred list checks are conducted for roles involving regulated activity. Re-checks are carried out every 3 years. All DBS information is handled securely, retained only as long as necessary, and disposed of in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice. We follow the principles of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order, ensuring fair treatment of applicants with criminal records.
August 2024: Integrated references to Staff Code of Conduct (Sept 2024) and DBS Checks Policy (Aug 2024); expanded Safer Recruitment and Professional Conduct sections accordingly.