

Allegations and Whistleblowing (Safeguarding)

1. Purpose and content

The purpose of this appendix of the College Safeguarding Policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines to staff regarding the actions they must take to raise concerns about staff; or about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the College's safeguarding arrangements.

The College Safeguarding Policy has been developed in line with statutory guidance and the locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board. The policy applies to all learners and all staff (including agency and hourly paid staff) irrespective of anyone's position or role in the College, together with governors and any workers who are at the College on a voluntary/placement/other professional basis.

Please note that the term 'College' is used throughout this appendix, as a generic term that encompasses all organisations within the wider College group; namely Stockton Riverside College, Redcar & Cleveland College, NETA, Bede Sixth Form College, The Skills Academy and Tees Valley Catering. The term 'staff' is also used as a generic term that encompasses all groups of workers as outlined in the paragraph above.

2. Definitions

- **Whistleblowing:** Whistleblowing is the term used when someone who works in, or for, an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, illegality or risk in the organisation (e.g. neglect of safeguarding responsibilities) and/or the cover up of any of these.

3. Taking safeguarding seriously

All staff must be aware of, and avoid, poor practice:

- Failing to listen to the views of the child / vulnerable adult
- Failing to act on, and refer, the early signs of abuse and neglect or radicalisation /terrorism
- Sharing information too slowly
- Poor record keeping
- Failing to act or re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- Lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action

4. Acting on concerns about staff and/or College safeguarding practice

All staff are assured their concerns will be taken seriously by College senior leaders. Concerns about members of staff must be immediately reported to one of the following:

- Principal Phil Cook
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Mark Moore
- Any member of the College Senior Leadership Team

Concerns about staff may be because:

- They have behaved/are behaving in a way that has, or may, harm a learner
- They may have possibly committed an offence that may raise questions about their suitability to be in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults
- They have acted/are acting in an inappropriate way with learners

Concerns about staff may relate to current or historic behaviour and must be reported regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the College or another place. The College Designated Lead for Safeguarding must be informed of all allegations that raise concerns about child and/or vulnerable adult protection so they can consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), police and social care services as appropriate.

Concerns about College safeguarding practice must be immediately reported to one of the following:

- Principal Phil Cook
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Mark Moore
- Any member of the College Senior Leadership Team

5. Whistleblowing

If your concerns are about the Principal or you feel unable to raise your safeguarding concerns about a member of staff or College safeguarding practice or if you feel your genuine concerns are not being addressed:

Contact the nominated Governor, Norma Wilburn, via Sarah Thompson (Clerk to the Governors) by:

- Email – sarah.thompson@stockton.ac.uk
- Telephone – 01642 865415

If the situation is not rapidly resolved follow the guidance available via the link on page 9 of the Department for Education (DfE) September 2018: Keeping children safe in education; statutory guidance for schools and colleges. This document is available on the staff gateway on the home page of the College Safeguarding (including Prevent) site.

6. College duty of care to staff

The College is committed to dealing with any allegations or issues quickly, and in a fair and consistent way, that provides effective protection for whistle-blowers and any learners /others involved whilst at the same time supporting the member of staff who is the subject of an allegation. This will include providing a named contact to any member of staff who is suspended whilst an allegation is investigated. The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of an allegation against a member of staff:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation

Further information is available in the Staff Disciplinary policy. This document is available to staff on the policies and procedures section on the staff gateway under Human Resources.