DN COLLEGES GROUP

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide DN Colleges Group and its subsidiaries (hereafter referred to as “the College”) with a clear framework of principles that underpin its approach to safeguarding and protection.

1.2 This policy aligns with the College’s Strategy, Vision, and Values, reflecting its commitment to safeguarding, health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion, and data protection. It aims to prevent harm, promote wellbeing, and ensure the safety of all students. The College recognises its duty to safeguard and protect children, young people, and adults at risk.

1.3 This policy demonstrates the College’s commitment to safeguarding in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (and any subsequent updates) and Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any concerns, disclosures, or incidents will be managed in line with this policy and the College’s Safeguarding Handbook for Staff.

1.4 The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy is the revised version of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, based on sector research and giving gravity to supporting adults as well as children and young people. Adult learning and Higher Education is a major delivery area at DN Colleges Group and ensuring we have robust adult safeguarding arrangements in place is vital. This policy is reviewed annual in-line with Keeping Children Safe in Education reviewed guidance.

2 Scope

2.1 Although legislation is specifically related to children and adults at risk, the College is committed to safeguarding all students/learners and apprentices.

2.2 We are committed to our duties and responsibilities outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 guidance. We will maintain a vigilant safeguarding culture where responsibility is shared by all, and where students feel safe, supported, and able to achieve their full potential.

2.3 Students will be supported to understand how to keep themselves safe, including in online environments. They will know how to raise concerns, access support, and will be confident that they are listened to and that appropriate action will be taken promptly.

2.4 The College expects all staff to maintain a high level of vigilance and to be alert to the signs and indicators of harm/potential harm. Staff must understand their safeguarding responsibilities and apply statutory guidance, particularly KCSIE, within their practice. This includes the timely identification, recording, and reporting of concerns in line with College procedures.

2.5 Effective safeguarding is underpinned by strong partnership working. Staff are expected to work collaboratively with safeguarding leads, and, where appropriate, engage with external agencies to ensure that individuals receive timely and appropriate support.

2.6 Safeguarding arrangements are supported through robust training, clear procedures, and strong leadership oversight, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with Ofsted expectations across quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management.

2.7 In line with safer recruitment requirements set out in KCSIE, this policy applies to all applicants for employment and voluntary roles. The College operates robust recruitment and selection procedures to deter, identify, and reject individuals who may pose a risk. It also provides a framework for

managing admissions and participation, through a proportionate and risk-assessed approach, for individuals with criminal convictions or ongoing investigations.

2.8 The College recognises that some learners may be at increased risk due to factors such as previous experiences, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), mental health needs, or communication barriers. In line with KCSIE, we will ensure that these learners receive appropriate support, including early help where required.

2.9 We will work in partnership with relevant agencies, including local safeguarding partners, to identify risks, share information appropriately, and secure the best possible outcomes for students.

2.10 Reasonable adjustments and additional support may be implemented where appropriate to ensure equitable access to College procedures, while maintaining safeguarding standards. Decisions will be made by the Director of Human Resources, informed by appropriate professional advice, including Occupational Health where required.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, all staff must understand their role and be prepared to take timely and appropriate action to protect individuals from harm.

3.2 The Chief Operating Officer – People and Information has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy in addition to ensuring sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) to discharge their responsibilities.

3.3 The Board of Governors will ensure compliance with local authority Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent policies, procedures and arrangements, in addition to the legislative requirements detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and any subsequent amendments or updates.

3.4 Senior Leaders (including the Principal and Executive Team) are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They promote a culture of vigilance, ensure staff receive appropriate training and support, allocate sufficient resources, and ensure concerns are responded to promptly and appropriately.

3.5 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), including the Associate Director of Safe-guarding and Director of Student Support and Safeguarding have overall responsibility for safeguarding. DSLs provide expert advice, manage safeguarding concerns, ensure referrals are made where necessary to statutory and non-statutory services, and maintain oversight of safeguarding practice, including record keeping and multi-agency working. They work closely with the College's HR team, and in particular with the Director of HR to respond to any allegations made against staff.

3.6 Deputy DSLs respond to safeguarding related incidents on a frontline/operational basis, whereby they work actively with students to provide reactive, ongoing and preventative support to ensure everyone is safe. They work with internal external agencies, stakeholders, and parents/carers to identify, plan and review safeguarding provisions and support for students.

3.7 The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring safer recruitment processes are robust and compliant with statutory guidance. This includes pre-employment checks, maintaining the Single Central Record, and managing concerns relating to staff suitability, including allegations.

3.8 All staff have a duty to safeguard students by maintaining vigilance and professional curiosity. They must identify, record, and report concerns without delay in line with College procedures, maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and act as positive role models. They work actively with safeguarding professionals in College daily to provide appropriate and timely mechanisms of support.

3.9 Leaders and managers are responsible for ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and consistently applied within their areas. They provide oversight, support staff in managing concerns, and ensure safeguarding remains a priority in day-to-day practice.

3.10 Students are encouraged to contribute to a safe environment by acting responsibly, supporting their peers, and reporting concerns. The College ensures students know how to access support and feel confident to do so.

3.11 Trade unions are responsible for safeguarding the rights, physical safety and wellbeing of their members.

4 Definitions and/or Relevant Legislation

Safeguarding Children

4.1 **Definition of a Child**
A child is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as any individual who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

4.2 **Definition of Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare**
In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 guidance, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:

- Protecting children from harm, abuse, and maltreatment
- Preventing any negative impact on a child's physical or mental health and development
- Ensuring children are raised in environments that provide safe and effective care
- Taking appropriate action to support all children in achieving positive outcomes

Safeguarding Adults

4.3 **Definition of an Adult at Risk**

An adult at risk refers to a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or may be at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves due to their care needs

This may include individuals with physical, mental, sensory, learning, or cognitive disabilities, as well as those affected by substance misuse or brain injury.

For the purposes of this policy, the College adopts definitions in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Care Act 2014, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). These provide a consistent framework for safeguarding practice.

4.4 **Safeguarding**
Safeguarding refers to the actions taken to protect the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk, including preventing harm, protecting health and development, ensuring safe care, and enabling positive outcomes.

4.5 **Child / Young Person**
A child or young person is any individual under the age of 18.

4.6 **Adult at Risk**
An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves as a result.

4.7 **Abuse**
Abuse is a violation of an individual's rights and may occur as a single act or repeated acts. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect, financial abuse, discriminatory abuse, and domestic abuse. Abuse may occur in person, online, or within institutional settings, and may be perpetrated by adults or peers.

4.8 **Safeguarding Concern**
A safeguarding concern is any information, observation, or disclosure indicating that an individual may be at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

4.9 **Disclosure**
A disclosure occurs when an individual shares information about abuse or harm they have experienced or are experiencing.

4.10 **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
The DSL is the senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including managing concerns, providing advice, and liaising with external agencies. Deputy DSLs support this role.

4.11 **Early Help**
Early help refers to support provided as soon as a need is identified to prevent escalation and improve outcomes.

4.12 **Radicalisation and Extremism**
Radicalisation is the process by which an individual comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies. Extremism is the active opposition to fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance.

4.13 **Position of Trust**
A position of trust exists where a member of staff has authority over or responsibility for a student and must maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

4.14 **Multi-Agency Working**
Multi-agency working is the coordinated approach between organisations to safeguard and promote welfare through effective communication and collaboration.

5 The Policy

5.1 The College is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk. Safeguarding is a core priority embedded across all aspects of College life, and all staff, governors, volunteers, and partners share responsibility for maintaining a safe and supportive environment.

5.2 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the College adopts a proactive and preventative approach, ensuring students feel safe, valued, and able to raise concerns. The College

is committed to protecting students from harm, abuse, and exploitation, while promoting their wellbeing and enabling them to thrive.

5.3 Safeguarding extends beyond protection from harm and includes promoting physical and mental health, early identification of need, and timely, effective support. The College ensures robust policies, clear procedures, and appropriate training so that staff can confidently identify and respond to concerns.

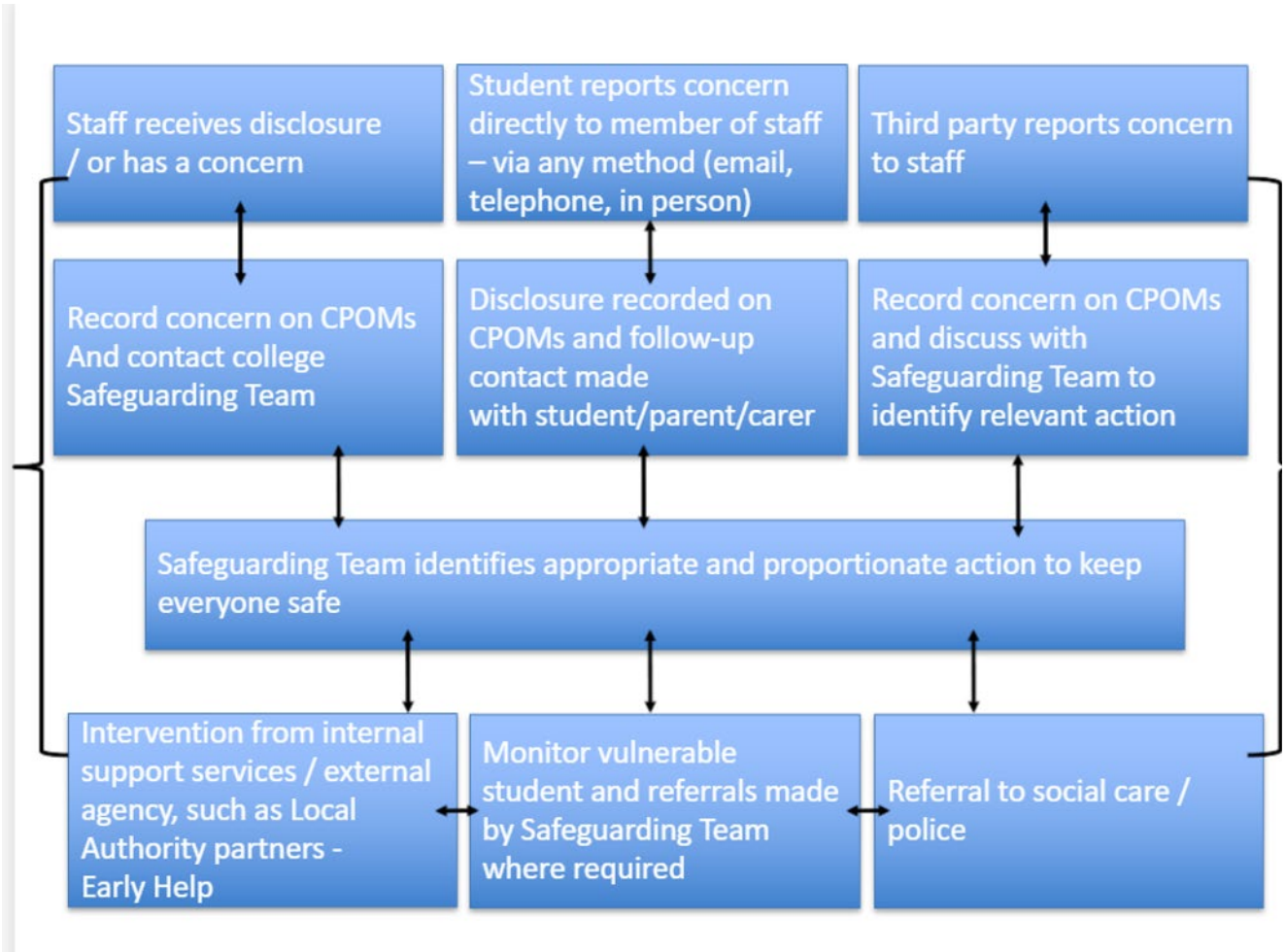
5.4 Strong leadership oversight, clear accountability, and a culture of vigilance ensure safeguarding is consistently applied. The College works in partnership with external agencies to support effective information sharing and coordinated responses.

5.5 The College promotes an inclusive environment where all students are listened to, respected, and supported. Safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and continuous improvement.

5.6 **Recognising and Responding to Concerns**

Staff must be vigilant and able to recognise indicators that a child, young person, or adult at risk may be experiencing, or is at risk of, harm. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, staff should be alert to the fact that safeguarding issues can arise in many forms and may not always be immediately obvious. It should always be the intention to approach suspected incidents with professional curiosity.

<u>Procedure to Follow</u>



5.7 There may be incidents whereby a member of staff has concerns about another member of staff. These should be reported to the Director of HR or Director of Student Support and Safeguarding

5.8 If a student has a concern about a member of staff, they should report this via the college Safeguarding Team

5.9 If a staff member of student has a concern about the Principal or CEO, this should be reported directly to the Board of Governors for appropriate action to be taken: college.governors@dncolleges.ac.uk

Training and Awareness

5.10 The College is committed to ensuring that all staff, governors and relevant stakeholders are appropriately trained and supported to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, safeguarding training is mandatory and is regularly updated to reflect current statutory guidance, local priorities and emerging risks.

5.11 All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This ensures that they understand relevant safeguarding policies, the procedures for reporting concerns, the role of the Designated/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, and expectations as part of their role. Induction training also includes awareness of online safety, the College's filtering and monitoring arrangements, and the key risks faced by students.

5.12 The College provides regular updates and refresher training to ensure that staff knowledge remains current and that safeguarding remains a central part of daily practice. Annual updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education are provided, as well as themed safeguarding-focused training during college CPD weeks/days.

5.13 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads receive enhanced, role-specific training. Their knowledge is refreshed regularly, and at least annually, to ensure they remain up to date with national developments, local safeguarding arrangements and emerging issues. They are responsible for providing guidance, support and challenge to staff, ensuring that safeguarding practice across the College is effective and consistent.

5.14 The Safeguarding Link Governor is appropriately trained to support and challenge complex safeguarding issues.

Early Help and Student Support

5.15 The College recognises that effective safeguarding includes a strong commitment to early identification and early help. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the College takes a proactive approach to identifying emerging needs and supporting students before concerns escalate into more serious safeguarding issues.

5.16 Early help is understood as providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child or young person's life. The College recognises that early intervention can significantly improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of harm. Staff are expected to be alert to signs of vulnerability, distress or unmet need and to take timely action in line with safeguarding procedures.

5.17 The College provides a comprehensive framework of student support that promotes wellbeing, inclusion and engagement. This includes pastoral care, safeguarding support, mental health and wellbeing services, and additional learning support where required. The College recognises that behaviour, attendance and engagement can be indicators of underlying need, and staff are expected to respond with a focus on understanding and addressing the root causes.

5.18 All staff play a role in early identification. They are expected to build positive and professional relationships with students, enabling them to recognise changes in behaviour, presentation or engagement that may indicate emerging concerns. Staff are required to report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, ensuring that information is considered in a coordinated and timely manner.

5.19 The Designated Safeguarding Lead provides oversight of early help and student support processes within the College. This includes assessing concerns, determining appropriate levels of intervention and coordinating support. The College works closely with internal support services and external agencies to ensure that interventions are timely, proportionate and effective.

5.20 The College recognises the importance of a multi-agency approach to early help. Where appropriate, it will work in partnership with parents, carers and external professionals to provide coordinated support. This may include contributing to early help assessments, attending multi-agency meetings and implementing agreed support plans. The College ensures that information is shared appropriately to support effective intervention while maintaining a focus on the best interests of the student.

5.21 Student voice is a key element of early help and support. The College fosters an environment in which students feel safe, listened to and able to seek help. Students are encouraged to share concerns about their own wellbeing or that of others, and the College ensures that appropriate support is in place in response.

5.22 All early help actions and support arrangements are recorded accurately and monitored to ensure that they are having a positive impact. The College reviews outcomes regularly and adjusts support where necessary to ensure that students' needs are met effectively.

5.23 The College recognises that early help and student support are critical to safeguarding. By identifying needs at the earliest opportunity and responding in a coordinated and supportive way, the College ensures that students are protected, supported and able to achieve positive outcomes.

6 Relevant Policies and Procedures

6.1 Prevent Policy
Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Data Protection Policy
Acceptable Use of IT Systems & Equipment Policy
IT Security Policy
Student Information Disclosure and Third-Party Contact Policy

7 Who to Contact with Queries

7.1 Reece Layton, Director of Student Support & Safeguarding
Claire Satwick, Associate Director of Safeguarding, Counselling & Wellbeing

8 Communication

8.1 The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy will be made available on the College intranet.

9 Authorisation

Policy Holder:	Chief Operating Officer – People & Information
Union Approval & Date:	(if applicable)
SLT Approval & Date:	23 September 2026
Governor Committee/ Board Approval:	Search, Governance & People Committee – 28 September 2026 Corporation Board – 14 October 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2029

*Policies will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a specific requirement to undertake a review more frequently. If for any reason a review does not take place in the planned period, the policy will remain current until a review takes place.

The Equality Impact has been considered on this policy and procedure.