St Mary's University

Safeguarding Policy

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1 Background

The policy is intended to provide an overarching framework for safeguarding, within which other more specific policies and procedures will sit. In addition, it outlines the University's responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk.

The University is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all staff, students and visitors.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students of the University.

- All persons whose normal place of work is on premises of the University
- All registered students and apprentices at the University (whether full-time or part-time)
- The St Mary's University Students' Union (SMSU), and any of its constituent societies, clubs and associations
- The officers and employees of the SMSU
- All bodies or persons not associated with the University who hire or otherwise use the University's facilities
- Volunteers and sessional workers/HPAs
- Those who are associated with First Star Academy and Sport St Mary's.

The policy applies to activities which take place:

- On University premises
- During off-site placements,
- During online working and learning and home working.
- Other off-site activities organised or supported by the University

3 Definitions

- **Child** - For the purpose of this Policy, the term 'child or young person' applies to a person who is less than 18 years of age;

- **Adult at Risk –** refers to any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. It should be noted that the definition of an adult at risk means that this can be a transient category for some individuals. It is difficult to give an exhaustive list of those who may be considered an 'adult at risk', so what follows is intended to be indicative only:
  - People who do not have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety
  - People who have communication difficulties
  - People who are physically dependent on others for personal care and activities of daily life
  - Those who have experienced abuse / childhood abuse
  - Those living in an environment marked by domestic violence or drug misuse
  - Those living in sheltered or temporary accommodation

- o Migrants or people are seeking refugee status
- o Victims of trafficking
- o Individuals who have a history of bullying and/or abuse
- o Care Leavers or young carers
- o Someone subject to forced marriage

- **Visitors** - Including clients, external groups, organisations, visiting children and individuals in any kind of capacity.

- **Volunteers** - someone spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit other people or the environment.

- **Safeguarding -** Protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

- **Abuse or Harm –** A person may abuse a child or an adult at risk by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse or harm may be:
  - o A single act, of any scale, which causes harm and can be of varying degrees
  - o Repeated acts of a similar or different nature
  - o Intentional or unintentional
  - o An act of neglect or a failure to act on the part of someone who has caring responsibilities

- **Prevent Duty** - The duty imposed on universities and other public authorities by the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The government has issued statutory guidance for all public authorities, and guidance specifically aimed at universities, on this duty (the 'Prevent duty guidance').

- **Prevent Policy** –This policy sets out how the University is complying with the Prevent Duty and the steps staff and/or students should follow if they have any concerns. Further information on the University's Prevent strategy can be found here

A more detailed definition of terms and guidance on recognising abuse can be found on staff.net at the following Link

4   Expectations and procedures

4.1   Safeguarding Preventative Measures– Policies and Procedures:
The University takes seriously its responsibilities for safeguarding and has a number of policies in place to underpin this obligation. Understanding these policies and procedures is essential to safeguarding. These policies have been drawn up on the basis of guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk.

4.2   Children and Adults at Risk

The University has in place a range of preventative measures, policies and procedures to protect children and adults at risk from harm, exploitation and abuse. These include the following:

- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk
- Student Admissions Policy
- Staff and Student Recruitment Policies
- Sport St Marys Safeguarding guidance, code of conduct and procedures
- First Star Academy Safeguarding guidance, code of conduct and procedures
- Engagement of Contractors/Policy on Construction Work
- Prevent Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy and Procedure
- Events Management
- Handling sensitive data and information/Data Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy

4.3   Staff, Students and Visitors:

The University has a number of other policies and procedures which have relevance to the safeguarding of students and staff and which should be considered alongside this policy where necessary. These include:

Staff and Student Relationship Policy	Social Media Policy
Statement Policy	Student Admissions Policy
Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures	Student Disciplinary Procedures
Disclosure and Barring Service	Policy on Alcohol Consumption and/or Substance Abuse at Work
Health and Safety Policy	Whistleblowing – Public Interest Disclosure and Procedure
IT Policy	Work experience and volunteers
Out of Hours Policy	Business Continuity Plan

5   Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

The University has a specific policy in relation to Children, Young People and Adults At Risk which can be found here. The below is an extract for this but the main policies should be read for the most up to date information and guidance.

5.1   The Nature of Abuse or Harm

This guidance encompasses all types of abuse that may be current or historical. The experience of abuse, harm or neglect can at times be subjective and is therefore

difficult to clearly define. However, it is generally accepted that these can occur through intentional or unintentional misuse of the power and control that one person has over another. This definition is 'motive free', i.e. it does not matter whether the perpetrator intended harm to take place. What matters is whether or not harm was caused.

The decision to act on the procedures set out in this policy will depend upon several key factors:
- The severity of ill-treatment, self-harm, abuse or neglect
- The degree and extent of the harm done
- The duration and frequency of abuse and / or neglect

5.2 Roles & Responsibilities

As part of its commitment to Safeguarding the University expects all its staff, students and contractors to report to a senior member of staff any concerns they may have regarding any individual believed to be at risk of harm, radicalisation or involvement in extremist or terrorist activity.

The University has nominated staff to assume responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. These include:

5.2.1 Lead Safeguarding Officers (LSOs) – have overall responsibility for the strategic and operational implementation of the policy and guidelines. The LSO fulfils a 'facilitative' rather than investigative role. Likewise, where issues about wider protection are not the responsibility of the University, e.g. when a student discloses childhood sexual abuse, the University may enquire about the potential risk for others, but it is the responsibility of the Local Authority and / or the police to ensure that others are not at risk of abuse from an alleged abuser. The Lead Safeguarding Officers (LSO) responsibilities are currently divided between the following roles:
- **Head of Registry Services**
- **Head of Student Services**
- **Director of the Institute of Education**
- **Head of Department (Sport)**
- **Director of Estates & Campus Services**
- **Director of Human Resources**

5.2.2 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

There will be a DSO assigned to each Faculty, Institute and Service who is responsible for providing immediate support and for liaising with the relevant Lead Safeguarding Officer.

5.2.3 Vetting and Training of Staff

The University will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and, where appropriate, will provide training in Safeguarding and Prevent Duty awareness for staff (however appointed or engaged), in line with current policy, procedures and professional guidance.

The university requires all staff to undertake a Safeguarding training module as

part of the essential training to ensure all staff are able to understand what Safeguarding means and who may be affected.

LSO's & DSO's will undertake further annual specific Safeguarding training suited to their responsibilities.

5.2.4 Senior Management Lead

The Chief Operating Operator has responsibility for ensuring suitable Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.

5.3 Safeguarding Working Group

The group monitors the implementation of the policy and keeps the policy and guidelines under review, ensuring that new guidance is incorporated as required, e.g. in line with legal requirements and appropriate guidance.

5.4 Responding to Concerns, Allegations and Incidents

The University encourages staff and students to adopt a responsible approach to working with children, young people and adults at risk and will respond promptly to all concerns raised under this Policy. Staff and students should be reassured that all reports, made in good faith, will be dealt with fairly, regardless of the outcome. Allegations made maliciously will be dealt with following the University's staff or student disciplinary procedures.

The primary responsibility of staff and students is to report concerns regarding children, young people or adults at risk of abuse and/or harm through the relevant channels as outlined in the guidance for responding to concerns, allegations and incidence.

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