

CHRIST CHURCH
**STUDENTS'
UNION**



'to better student life and enrich student experiences'

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Officer Champions	President (Education & Wellbeing) Students' Union President
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1. Policy Statement

- a. Christ Church Students' Union ('CCSU' or 'the Union') encourages and values the participation of children and vulnerable adults within the Union's activities. The Union will make every effort to safeguard those participating in its activities from harm, and is committed to creating a safe environment for every individual participating in any aspect of Union activity. The Union will promote a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the wellbeing of others.

- b. The Union believes that all persons, regardless of age and background, have at all times and in all situations, the right to access and enjoy the activities and services of the organisation in a happy, safe and secure environment. The Union will ensure that this is the case by implementing this Policy, primarily via project-planning, participant induction and/or communication regarding the Policy's intent and ensuing rules of behaviour and action, and by the establishment of systems and procedures. This Policy applies to all Union members in their interaction with and on behalf of the Union, staff, volunteers, and other people who participate in Union activities.

2. Introduction

- a. The purpose of this Policy is to recognise and describe the Union's responsibilities, legal and moral, concerning the safety of children and vulnerable adults within its activities, and outline the duty and responsibility of staff, elected officers, volunteers,

and trustees working on behalf of the organisation in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

- b. Through this Policy, the Union is committed to promoting the wellbeing and enjoyment of children and vulnerable adults in any interaction with the Union, and protecting their health, safety and general welfare while in the company of Union representatives.
- c. The fundamental principle, both in law and good practice, is that whenever the interests of a child or vulnerable adult are concerned with an organisation's work, their welfare must always be paramount. The Union recognises this and all Union representatives should seek to implement this principle and follow the organisation's guidance, spearheaded by this policy and its related Procedures and Guidance.

3. Principles

- a. This Policy is based on the following principles:
 - i. All those who engage in the Union's services or activities have rights as individuals;
 - ii. Individuals will be treated with dignity and respect, and protected from abuse regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity;
 - iii. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount;
 - iv. All children and vulnerable adults should be safeguarded from harm;
 - v. It is the responsibility of everyone to report concerns about the safety of children and vulnerable adults, following the Procedures which accompany this Policy;
 - vi. All suspicions or alleged cases of misconduct or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
 - vii. All participants in Union activities should feel comfortable and able in approaching Union representatives; and
 - viii. Data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- b. In response to these principles, the Union will ensure the following commitments:
 - i. Safe Practice – the Union will have guidelines to ensure the general safety of activities and to ensure the effective management of activities;
 - ii. Supervision – the Union will ensure procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers;
 - iii. Awareness – the Union will ensure that all representatives are aware of the problem of abuse and the risks to vulnerable groups;
 - iv. Prevention – the Union will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that representatives minimise the risks to vulnerable groups and there is a code of behaviour that outlines the behaviour expected of workers towards children and vulnerable adults;

- v. Reporting – the Union will ensure that representatives and participants in activities are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of vulnerable groups;
- vi. Responding – the Union will ensure that action is taken to support and protect vulnerable groups where concerns arise regarding possible abuse; and
- vii. Communication – the Union will share information about concerns with children and parents and others who need to know.

4. Scope of the Policy

- a. This Policy affects all staff, elected officers, volunteers and trustees of the Union and provides guidance for anybody who has contact with children or potentially vulnerable persons via Union sponsored or supported activities. For the purpose of this Policy, 'representative' shall refer to staff, elected officers, volunteers and trustees of the Union, or anyone else who is, or could be seen as, officially acting on behalf of the Union in the course of their duties.
- b. The definitions of 'child' and 'vulnerable adult' used in this policy are as follows:
 - i. **A child** - anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday; and
 - ii. **A vulnerable adult** - described officially in Section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006 and refers to a 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 who is or may be unable to take care of [themselves], or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation" (Department of Health (2000), No Secrets).
- c. For the purposes of this Policy, the definition of a vulnerable adult may be extended as follows in pursuit of the Policy's aims. Such extensions ensure the Union's commitment to the safeguarding of its members who access Advice and Representational services:
 - i. To persons who do not require access to services, but may have a learning or physical disability; a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or, a reduction in physical or mental capacity;
 - ii. To persons whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates, such as an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above; and
 - iii. To victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse behaviour as far as practicable in ensuring their experience with the Union is consistent with the aims of this Policy.
- d. In everyday interaction between representatives and/or visitors, it is not always possible to determine if someone falls within the categories of vulnerable adult or child. Therefore it is important that representatives treat everyone with equal sensitivity, which in itself will add to the provision of a friendly, safe and secure environment.

5. Procedure

- a. The Union has developed Safeguarding Procedures and Guidance, which set out the processes by which representatives or participants in activities can report certain concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults within the organisation. The Safeguarding Procedures also establish key individuals within the Union who are responsible for responding to concerns and liaising with the appropriate agencies.

6. Recruitment

- a. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- b. Recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the appropriate level where legislation requires. Applicants for employed posts are asked to disclose any 'unspent' criminal convictions in any application (in recognition of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) except in the case of applications for posts working with children, vulnerable adults or in positions of trust where all convictions must be declared (whether paid or voluntary). Failure to reveal information relating to unspent convictions could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or disciplinary action for existing posts.
- c. Should any concerns arise following a DBS disclosure then this will be passed onto the Designated Person or Managing Director for information and guidance. All new representatives will go through an induction process, including relevant training or briefing for their role. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all representatives are adequately supported, where practicable and relevant.
- d. All prospective representatives should be appointed via an application system. Volunteers who are not trustees must be students of Canterbury Christ Church University; all other representatives will be interviewed prior to appointment or appointed by participation in a public democratic process. The Union will ensure that all representatives have appropriate qualifications and training.

7. Training and Supervision

- a. New staff and volunteers will have a Designated Person (i.e. supervisor) that will ensure that a proper induction takes place. The supervisor will provide support to the new member of staff/volunteer in all areas of their work. All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this Policy as part of their induction process. Staff and volunteers should be able to identify the signs of abuse and should be confident about the steps to take and how to report any concerns.
- b. Induction, training and/or briefings will ensure that representatives receive relevant information pertaining to their role that would enable the individual to behave and operate their duties in-line with this Policy. For projects (as opposed to on-going,

staffed services), risk assessment actions and outcomes, as well as procedures and guidelines in this Policy, will serve as a basis for induction and briefing of representatives.

8. Creating a Safe and Caring Environment

- a. The Union will ensure the following to create a safe and caring environment:
 - i. A Risk Assessment is undertaken for each individual project, or in regards to services, prior to any new types of activities;
 - ii. Union representatives working with children or vulnerable adults will be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc;
 - iii. Union representatives working with children or vulnerable adults will plan activity sessions with the care, safety and inclusion of participants as their main concern including the use of appropriate activities;
 - iv. Wherever possible the Union will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes employees/volunteers being alone with a child or vulnerable adult for longer than a very brief period. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of an elected officer or member of staff and/or the children's parents/carers;
 - v. Information disclosed within the Advice Centre will be deemed confidential within the Service (i.e. not disclosed as 'secrets');
 - vi. Non-public meetings of the Advice Centre may occur between a vulnerable adult and staff, however, these meetings will be run in accordance with Advice Centre Policy;
 - vii. Representatives will treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect;
 - viii. Consent for the attendance of children or vulnerable adults at activities will be obtained; and
 - ix. Consent will be obtained from any parent/carer of a child/vulnerable adult to attend a Union sponsored activity.

9. Behaviour Guidelines

- a. In relation to their conduct and actions towards children or vulnerable adults, Union representatives should never:
 - i. Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing sport;
 - ii. Allow or engage in sexually provocative activities or language;
 - iii. Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
 - iv. Allow or engage in physical and/or sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults;
 - v. Allow children to use inappropriate language;
 - vi. Develop relationships which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;

- vii. Undertake any tasks for which they feel inadequately trained or have concerns about;
 - viii. Put themselves, or a child or vulnerable adult, at risk. This includes being alone with a child or vulnerable adult unnecessarily; and
 - ix. Condone, or participate in, behaviour which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- b. The Safety of participants and representatives is of prime consideration at all times. Representatives have a responsibility to:
- i. Record all accidents involving anyone participating in a Union activity;
 - ii. Familiarise themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment;
 - iii. Report suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies;
 - iv. Access to any consent forms for all children or vulnerable adults taking part in any activities. This information should be confidential; and
 - v. Acquire formal permission from parent/carers before taking photographs, videos, etc.
- c. Furthermore, project leaders of Union sponsored activities have the following additional responsibilities:
- i. To ensure all activities involving children and vulnerable adults are appropriately risk assessed and are countersigned by the Designated Person or Deputy;
 - ii. To keep an attendance register for all organised sessions; and
 - iii. To promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout organised activities.

10. Record Keeping

- a. All documentation related to Union sponsored activities will be retained in line with the Union's Data Protection Policy.

11. Designated Person

- a. There will be a named 'Designated Person' and a 'Deputy-Designated Person/s' for safeguarding matters at the Union. In the event of any concerns regarding a child/vulnerable adult then the Designated Person or Deputy will be informed at the earliest available opportunity. If necessary the Designated Person or Deputy will inform the relevant statutory public service, or seek advice from a relevant advisory organisation, without delay. The Designated Person will also ensure that the safeguarding procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.
- b. The Designated Person will be the Managing Director. The Deputy Designated Person(s) will be the Membership Services Manager and the Advice & Campaigns

Coordinator. Children/vulnerable adults and parents/carers will have a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns. This person will normally be the Designated Person or Deputy.

12. Raising Concerns

- a. Reporting concerns about a is a sensitive matter, but all representatives have a duty to do this. The Union will ensure support for representatives who, in good faith, reports concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child / vulnerable adult. For the purpose of clarity, a whistleblower shall be regarded as a witness, not a complainant.
- b. The Union will endeavour to ensure that every representative knows how to identify and report concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's safety when issues arise. For example:
 - i. A child or vulnerable adult alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
 - ii. An allegation is received from an anonymous source or third party;
 - iii. A child or vulnerable adult's appearance, behaviour or statements arouse suspicion;
 - iv. A report is made concerning misconduct of a worker towards a child or vulnerable adult; or
 - v. Abuse is observed.
- c. In such instances the representative, in whichever capacity, must inform the project leader/service manager, Designated Person or Deputy as soon as possible. If the matter is serious and/or urgent and no one can be contacted, then social services or the police should be contacted. Ensure the Designated Person is made aware of any action or incident so appropriate authorities can be liaised with.
- d. Where a representative is suspected to have acted outside of this Policy they will be suspended from any related duty whilst an investigation takes place as directed or delegated by the Designated Person.
- e. Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children, parents, and representatives. The Designated Person will, if appropriate, inform the University.
- f. Concerns would normally be shared with parents, carers, and (if appropriate) the relevant authorities as soon as possible, however, there could be circumstances when this could put the child/vulnerable adult at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately. Every effort will be made to respect the anonymity, if requested, of the person reporting the abuse, however, if allegations result in Court proceedings this may not be possible.

13. The Advice Centre

- a. The Advice Centre is a non-judgmental, non-directive advisory service for students at the University.
- b. The Union recognises that it is possible a student meeting the criteria of a vulnerable adult may visit the Service with the intention of receiving non-directive guidance where an accusation of abuse is disclosed, perhaps for the purpose of disclosure and student-led guidance on such disclosure, however, the student clearly portrays themselves of rational mind and judgment in relation to a personal experience of abuse. In this instance the procedure for disclosure will differ from that relating to all other instances of disclosure and as such, will only be applicable within the confines of the Advice Centre. It will be to the discretion of the Advice Officer to employ Advice Centre policies and practices regarding disclosure in the best interests of the vulnerable adult in this case.
- c. All Advice Officers in the Advice Centre receive comprehensive training, guidance and supervision in their roles. They are trained advisors; information divulged to the Service is retained within the Advice Centre and accessible by all personnel within the Service; personnel discuss cases together; share practice, concerns and possible solutions regards to cases; and therefore sufficient oversight and responsibility is already in place to manage the risks to vulnerable adults within the Service.
- d. Where Advice Officers may be unsure of whether a student is capable of making their own decisions regarding a disclosure or whether in-action would not be in the interests of the vulnerable adult, the Advice Centre may call upon partner agencies established for providing professional and, in some cases, statutory advice; Advice Centre policy provides a safeguard for such a scenario. All other aspects of the policy (i.e. excluding disclosure procedures) will apply to the Advice Centre.

14. Review

- a. The Union will ensure that safeguarding issues receive continuous attention and will regularly review this Policy and the related procedures to monitor implementation, training, and effectiveness.