

City University London Students' Union Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure

Approved by:	Trustee Board
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Responsible for Implementation	Chief Executive
Responsible for Interpretation	Trustee Board

Policy Introduction

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, and others representing City University London Students' Union (CULSU) who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. CULSU values and encourages the involvement of volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults in its activities and is committed to protecting their health, safety and general welfare.

This policy will be considered at least every three years by the CULSU Trustee Board. Responsibility for its day to day enactment will lie with the Chief Executive Officer.

For Reporting and Dealing with Incidents – Please see page 5

Policy Statement

Central to our mission is the importance of being student led and having a positive impact for our members. We provide a range of services such as student activities, advice, events, representation and volunteering. This policy applies to all staff volunteers, and others representing CULSU, who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

For the purpose of this policy, the term child or children means any child or young person under the age of 16. A young person is anyone between 16 and 18. A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who has a condition such as 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.

Guiding Principles:

When dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults, CULSU aims to:

- promote their general welfare

- recognise their rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect
- consistently apply fair and objective methods of selecting staff and volunteers
- plan activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults with care to minimise risks to their health and safety
- raise awareness of the dangers to which children, young people and vulnerable adults may be susceptible
- develop appropriate procedures for responding to accidents, incidents and alleged or suspected harm.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):

CULSU staff and volunteers who will have substantial, unsupervised access to children, young people or vulnerable adults should be DBS checked to the appropriate level. The DBS check searches your details against criminal records and other sources, including the Police national Computer. All individuals should be made aware that any appointment, whether paid or voluntary, is subject to satisfactory checks. Information gathered through this process should be treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice. The Union, the University and its partners will make volunteer recruitment decisions on a case by case basis and in line with relevant policies and procedures. When the project is external, the charity or organisation will be responsible for providing the application and covering the cost. These applications can take from between 10 days and 4 weeks to go through. When working with the Students' Union or the University, Human Resources (HR) will provide the application and the department that is organising the project, will provide the payment.

Risk Assessments and General Considerations:

Health and safety requirements must be carefully considered when planning and carrying out activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. CULSU's Health and Safety Policy applies to volunteers as well as employees. All staff and volunteers should carry out thorough risk assessments prior to undertaking events/activities with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- CULSU Health and Safety Policy
- CULSU Data Protection Policy

Designated People

CULSU will nominate designated people who are trained with safeguarding issues and making referrals. They should be contacted in the first instance for any guidance and advice.

The designated people have the following responsibilities regarding the coordination of safeguarding issues including:

- Receiving concerns and disclosures made to staff or volunteers

- Making referrals to Social Services and/or the Police and supporting them in their procedures
- Not to investigate allegations themselves
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals as necessary
- Supporting staff and volunteers and keeping them updated with appropriate information on a 'need to know' basis
- Ensuring records are completed and filed confidently
- Providing access for volunteers to appropriate and up to date safeguarding training

The following positions within CULSU will act as the designated people

- a) Chief Executive (Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer)
- b) Deputy Chief Executive (Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer)
- c) Student Opportunities Coordinator (Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer)

Planning and Supervision:

Whenever an employee or volunteer works with children, young people or vulnerable adults (whether or not carers remain ultimately responsible), CULSU's guidelines on appropriate planning and supervision need to be observed to reduce the risk of harm.

- Activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults should be carefully planned to ensure that maximum protection is provided at all times
- Those who are involved in an activity organised by CULSU should be supervised and supported wherever possible, ensuring that the appropriate ratio of employees is present. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the number and age range of the people involved and whether anyone involved has any special needs
- Wherever possible both female and male employees/volunteers should be present.

Code of Conduct:

Some actions, no matter how well intentioned, may be misinterpreted and leave all parties vulnerable. The following is a quick reference guide to appropriate behaviour when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

a) CULSU staff and volunteers should:

- remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow
- be alert to any potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by young people
- aim for separate sleeping accommodation for males and females during residential activities
- ensure they have adequate training if supervising sports or games
- respect individuals' rights to privacy
- provide access for children and young people to discuss any concerns they may have

- speak to the appropriate person if they have concerns about an individual's safety.

a) CULSU staff and volunteers should not:

- be left alone for substantial periods of time with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where one to one work is necessary they should inform another staff member where they are going, with whom and for how long
- permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves (eg ridiculing and bullying)
- show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind, which could be misunderstood
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the appropriate person.

Raising Awareness of Dangers Abuse:

Abuse is generally described under five headings and is usually referred to in the context of children;

- neglect,
- emotional abuse,
- physical abuse,
- sexual abuse and
- bullying.

Informing:

By issuing this policy, CULSU is keen to ensure that all relevant employees and volunteers:

- know the types of harm to which children, young people and vulnerable adults are susceptible
- are alert to behaviour, which suggests something may be wrong
- are able to talk to someone if they become aware of anything, which causes them to feel uncomfortable
- know how to deal with alleged or suspected harm.

Responding to Accidents/Incidents:

In the event of an accident to an individual, first aid, by a qualified first-aider should be administered and the situation managed to ensure the welfare of the individual and the safety of others. The Emergency Services should be called for where appropriate.

An Accident/Incident Report Form should be completed with the University Health and Safety department. Where appropriate the circumstances of the accident should be

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investigated to establish the cause and to identify what remedial action should be taken to minimise the possibility of a recurrence. A comparison with the risk assessment for the activity should also be made to establish if the correct controls/actions have been in place/followed when the incident occurred.

Fatal accidents, major injuries and dangerous occurrences should be notified without delay by telephone to the appropriate CULSU staff member, after alerting the appropriate authorities.

Where an accident/incident involving young people has been narrowly avoided employees and volunteers should detail its nature and pass the information on to the appropriate CULSU staff member.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult wants to talk about abuse, it is essential that the employee or volunteer:

- listens carefully to what the person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly
- lets them know that to help them someone else must be told
- reassures them that they are not to blame
- is aware that they may have been threatened
- does not push them for information
- reassures them that they are right to talk about it and what they say is accepted
- informs them of what will happen next and undertakes to let them know the outcome.

Dealing with alleged or suspected abuse:

If a young person or other person who may be vulnerable has talked about abuse, or abuse is suspected from common sense alarm bells, the CULSU employee or volunteer must do two things:

1. Notify the appropriate CULSU staff member.
2. Write down accurately what the individual has said.

Where the appropriate CULSU staff member is unavailable and the individual is considered to be in imminent danger employees or volunteers should contact the relevant authorities themselves. They should then inform the CULSU staff member as soon as possible on their return.

Where it is suspected that an employee or volunteer may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers should inform the CULSU staff member as soon as possible. The employee/volunteer should be immediately removed from access to children, young people and vulnerable adults, but be assured that no presumptions have been made and that the allegation will be fully investigated by the relevant authorities.

If gross misconduct is reasonably suspected, the relevant CULSU will use the relevant procedures including the Staff Complaints and Disciplinary procedure to investigate the allegations and determined the most appropriate course of action.

Dealing with incidents of abuse is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers should not:

- act alone

- start to investigate; or
- make any assumptions of guilt or innocence.

Full and accurate notes must be written as soon as possible, recording the date and time of the alleged incident or disclosure, the parties involved, what was alleged and action taken. Records should be as accurate as possible as they may be invaluable to the investigation and used as evidence in court. The appropriate CULSU staff member should keep a copy.

Any employee or volunteer who is involved in a disclosure of any kind may feel that they need to speak to a professional to reassure themselves that they have done the right thing. The NSPCC operate a 24-hour help line for anyone concerned about a child or young person. It is primarily for use by adults and can be used anonymously: 0800 800 600.

Confidentiality and Sensitivity:

When dealing with personal and emotive details of this nature, confidentiality must be maintained at all times since the allegations or suspicions may prove to be unfounded. Notes and records should be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation. No assumptions of guilt should be made unless and until an actual conviction has been obtained in the proceedings. A nominated CULSU staff member will maintain impartial contact during this process.