



Major Oak Education: Safeguarding Policy

Policy statement

Date Reviewed: 20/05/2019

Major Oak Education is a British educational services company, registered in the UK. Major Oak Education believes that it is unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognise the paramount importance of safeguarding all children and young people (U18s) in our care. We aim to create a safe environment in which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

We understand:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Ensuring that Major Oak Education practises safe recruitment: ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and have undergone all relevant checks.
- Ensuring that all adults and students (U18s) agree to and adopt a code of conduct which includes having read the Safeguarding Policy (see Major Oak Education's code of conduct policies).
- Sharing information and acting promptly and professionally over any concerns.

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including (see below):

- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against a child or young person
- Role of the designated safeguarding officer
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Safe recruitment policy and procedures
- Adult to child supervision ratios
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Whistleblowing policy





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We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.
This policy was last reviewed on: **20/05/2019**

Terminology:

Safeguarding: umbrella term meaning “looking after”

Child Protection: protecting children from direct harmful behaviour.

DBS: Data Barring Service (previously CRB)

Child: person under 18

Student: any person under 18 who a member of staff may come into contact with as a result of their employment in an educational establishment.

Social contact: the exchange of personal information between two or more people.

Electronic contact: the communication or publication of information (including images) between two or more people using an electronic device. This may occur using (but is not limited to) landline and mobile phones, other handheld electronic devices, gaming equipment and computers. Electronic contact may include but is not limited to voice communication, text communication, instant messaging, email, social networking sites, blogs, photos and videos.

Safe recruitment: recruitment procedures and practices which aim to prevent the appointment of people who may pose a risk to children.



Key Individual Roles and Levels of Responsibility

All staff have responsibility for safeguarding students at Major Oak Education programmes.

Julie Miles (Director and Student Welfare Manager) is Major Oak Education's designated Welfare Officer. In the event that Julie Miles is unavailable please contact Jacob Miles (07758815554) should be contacted as Major Oak Education's Deputy designated Welfare Officer.

Documents consulted to write the policy

Information has been taken from the English UK guide to writing a safeguarding policy, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DoE), "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (HMG), and the following legal acts have been considered: Children Act 1989, Sexual Offences Act 2003, The Prevent Duty for schools and childcare providers.

Code of Conduct

All adults and U18s are requested to follow a Major Oak Education Code of Conduct. This is to ensure that everyone has a positive experience within a safe environment based on mutual trust and respect. It is to protect students and adults alike, from any behaviours/actions which might be misconstrued. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that any person in a Position of Trust engaged in sexual activity of any sort with students under the age of 18 is breaking the law (even though the legal age of consent is 16). We expect our staff to help set standards by being excellent role models.

Adult/U18 Interaction

Please see Major Oak Education's staff and student Codes of Conduct, which give boundaries and clear guidance about behaviour and actions in a variety of settings, including residential accommodation.

Safe Working Practices for Staff

All members of staff should ensure that they avoid making themselves vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuses by following the guidelines set out in this policy, and procedures set out in staff training.

Electronic Contact with Children:

- Staff must request permission from the employer for any electronic contact with a student before, during and after the course.
- In any electronic contact with students staff must pay particular attention to use neutral, unemotive language that will not be misconstrued.
- Staff must not exchange any information with a student that they would not be happy to share with the child's parent or carer.
- Staff must avoid the exchange of personal information, personal photos, virtual gifts or the use of any application that suggests or encourages the sharing of personal feelings.
- Staff must not publish photos, videos or any other information about students except with the express agreement of the employer.
- Staff should be aware that personal information about them may be available in various forms online. Staff should be particularly cautious about their public web profiles and privacy settings.
- Staff should attempt to find ways of setting up and maintaining separate personal and professional electronic profiles.





Appropriate social contact (electronic or otherwise)

- Staff must maintain neutral, friendly relationships with students while avoiding exclusivity or overfamiliarity.
- Staff must resist any attempt by a student to develop an overfamiliar or exclusive social relationship.
- If a student confides sensitive personal information staff have a duty to listen and respond in a professional manner in accordance with organisation guidelines.

Social Networking Platforms

- If schools or classes set up social networking forums like Facebook / WeChat for students they should be closed groups.
- Staff and students must not share the same social networking group, other than those adults necessary to monitor and administer the group.
- Staff who monitor or administer social networking sites for students should use professional accounts that are as far as possible devoid of personal information
- Staff must not initiate or agree to friendship requests or similar with students that will result in the sharing of personal information, photos etc.

Data Protection

Major Oak Education takes data protection and privacy issues seriously, and we are committed to keeping any data we collect safe. A copy of our company Privacy Policy is on our website, www.majoroakeducation.co.uk.

Transport

When using taxi/coach companies, we only use those that have been properly DBS checked.

Whistleblowing

Staff have a legal obligation to information management of any concerns about colleagues not following the Code of Conduct. Staff who report this will not be penalised and their report will remain confidential.

Child Protection

If you are concerned that a student might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the Welfare Manager, Julie Miles. If they are not available, contact Jacob Miles, the designated deputy Welfare Officer. If someone else tells you, you also need to respond and follow Major Oak Education's procedure (see below).

Child Abuse is described by the World Health Organisation as: *"all forms of physical and/or emotional illtreatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship or responsibility, trust or power"*



There are four main categories of abuse as follows:


- Physical: through hitting, shaking, squeezing, kicking, punching etc.
- Sexual: though inappropriate physical contact, the taking of indecent images of children, or the encouragement of sexual activity by children for the purpose of adult gratification.
- Emotional: through persistent lack of affection, unrealistic adult demands, verbal bullying including cyber bullying.
- Neglect: persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including safety, nourishment, warmth, education and medical attention.

Recognising the symptoms of abuse

- It can be difficult to identify child abuse as it has various forms. The signs listed in this document are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Below are some typical indicators to look for:
- Unexplained injuries
- A child describing an abusive act that has happened to them
- Another child telling you of their concern about a friend/ fellow student
- Sexually explicit behaviour in games/ activities
- Serious distrust of adults
- Difficulty in making friends/ socialising with other children.
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-harming; suicide attempts

How to respond to concerns

- If you notice any physical or behavioural signs, tell the Designated Welfare Manager/ or Officer.
- If you suspect an adult is a threat to a child in some way tell the Designated Welfare Manager and continue to monitor the situation (see whistle blowing section).
- If a child/young person makes any comment that gives cause for concern react calmly and act accordingly as outlined below.
- Make a note of what was said and who was present and inform the Designated Welfare Manager. He/she will take appropriate action which may involve external agencies and contacting parents/guardians.
- Make sure that the student in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser.



How to react if a child chooses to talk to you

A child may choose any adult to talk to; therefore **all adults** need to know the right way to respond:

- Stay calm, accessible and receptive.
- Listen, hear and believe.
- Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference – this is very important for children whose **first language is not English**.
- Be aware of the non-verbal messages you are giving.
- Acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell.
- Don't probe for more information. Questioning the participant may affect how the participant's disclosure is received at a later date.
- Don't promise confidentiality to keep the information a secret.
- Don't deal with this yourself, act in accordance with the procedure in this policy.
- Keep a written record of the incident.

Allegations made against staff or other under 18s

Allegations can be made by U18s or other members of staff. Allegations can be made for a number of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- I. Abuse has actually taken place.
- II. Something happens to a student that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the student is unable to recognize that the situation and the people are different.
- III. Some students know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out.
- IV. An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

An allegation should be reported to the Welfare Manager, they will decide whether outside agencies, e.g. the police, the LCSB (Local Child Safeguarding Board) might be involved. Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, you should follow appropriate disciplinary procedure: common practice is for the alleged abuser to be suspended from work until the outcome of any investigation is clear. All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, reviewing organisational practice and putting in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

Keeping Records

1. An accurate record should be kept and should be signed by the person or people making the statement. The following details should be included:
2. Date and time of incident/disclosure.
3. Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event.
4. What was said or done and by whom.
5. Any further action taken by Major Oak Education to look into the matter.
6. Any further action taken.
7. Where relevant, the reasons why a decision was taken not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency. - Any interpretation/inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such.
8. Name of person reporting on the concern, name and designation of the person to whom the concern was reported, date and time and their contact details.

All this information should be recorded and stored in the Welfare Folder. All documentation is to be kept secure in the relevant centre within the lockable A4 cabinet

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and copied into an encrypted online drive and kept securely for up to 6 years depending on the severity of the allegation.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This is illegal in the UK and there is a legal duty to report if an adult finds out this has happened.

Safe Recruitment

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff who are likely to come into contact with students can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made. At Major Oak Education, the following procedures are followed:

All prospective employees complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two relevant referees. Major Oak Education follows up with both. All gaps in CVs are questioned during interview.

All potential employees will be interviewed by two qualified senior staff to establish previous experience in working in an environment where there is contact with students, and asked about their perceptions of acceptable behaviour.

All staff will have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure before they start employment with us. If not, until such time as the DBS is received, they will be closely monitored and not left on their own with U18s. References must also be received before the person starts work.

Employees recruited from abroad will provide a Police Check or Certificate of Good Conduct from the foreign country where they reside, as long as they have lived there for six months or longer. If that's not the case, they will need to obtain a new DBS certificate.

All original relevant documentation (proof of identity, qualifications) will be seen by the Programme Manager prior to the member of staff commencing employment.

Risk Assessments


Risk assessments are produced for our programme locations in co-ordination with the host university. They cover both on campus and off campus situations including excursions. They are conveyed to students during their induction session and reiterated frequently if they have a daily impact, e.g. crossing of roads, keeping together in groups on excursions, etc.

Duty to report

All members of staff are required to report to the Welfare Manager any concern or allegations about Major Oak Education practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put children/young people at risk of abuse or other serious harm.

- Staff have a duty to report to the employer any actual or perceived inappropriate development of the relationship between student and staff, electronic or otherwise.
- Any sensitive information communicated by a student to a member of staff, electronic or otherwise, must be reported to the employer.





Failure to comply:

- Non-compliance with the above policy will result in disciplinary procedures.
- Employers have a duty to remove an individual from regulated activity where there is risk of harm to children.
- Employers have a 'duty to refer' to external authorities* any suspicion or allegation of inappropriate contact by an individual engaged in regulated activity where there is risk of harm to children. (*ISA, police, local child protection authorities).

Abusive Behaviour

Major Oak Education will not accept any form of abusive behaviour towards our students from other students or adults on the course. This kind of behaviour may involve (not a comprehensive list):

- I. Verbal abuse: name-calling, racist or sexist comments, threatening language
- II. Physical/sexual abuse: touching, striking, spitting
- III. Emotional abuse: ostracising, neglecting, humiliating, intimidating

The sanctions that may be used include the offender:

- Being asked to make an apology
- Being taken out of class and given some supervised work to do
- Missing activities and excursions
- Being sent home

All staff have a collective responsibility for ensuring:

- that abusive behaviour does not go unnoticed
- that abusive behaviour is reported promptly

If you are not sure whether something you've seen should be dealt with under this heading, please speak to the Welfare Manager or Jacob Miles.

Procedure in the case of a Student abusing another student

In the event of an incident being reported to the Centre Welfare Manager, the student concerned will usually be asked to go to the Programme's office where they will remain while the Welfare Manager consults rapidly to verify the circumstances and gather any additional information. The student(s) will then be spoken to by the Welfare Manager, together with (as necessary) the Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator.

They will be told that they can bring a supporter/parent with them to the meeting. If the staff involved are content that the incident is not of the most serious sort, and that the student(s) concerned is unlikely to repeat the action, then the student will be given a warning as to his conduct and an appropriate sanction.

The student may also be obliged to meet with any other affected student(s) to offer an apology. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, a letter may be sent both to the agent with whom the student travelled, and to his/her parents/guardians. In more serious cases of abuse, the student would be returned home at their own expense. In the most serious cases, relevant outside agencies may be involved.



Procedure in the case of an adult abusing a student

The Welfare Manager will immediately notify the Programme Manager and Directors of Major Oak Education. All such instances of reported abuse between an adult and a student must be treated as serious, and need to be investigated without delay.

Depending on the exact circumstances of the incident, and the role of the staff member, he or she may be temporarily removed from their position.

The Directors in consultation with the Welfare Manager and Programme Manager will decide whether an outside agency needs to be involved at this stage. If the incident is of a serious nature, the staff member may face summary dismissal. If the incident is of a less serious nature it will be dealt with through Major Oak Education's disciplinary procedures.

Supervision ratios and arrangements

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of our programmes. Outside of communication session times, there is a programme of sports, tours and activities, and during this time, students will be supervised in a ratio of no more than 1:15.

Students who are not participating in the organised activities do not have permission to return to their rooms, or to leave the campus, unless they have been given permission by their parent, who will then take on the supervisory role.

All students will be registered three times each day: in communication sessions (am or pm), activity session (am or pm) and in their accommodation in the evening. Teachers will take the register in the first class of the day. The Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator will be responsible for taking the register before activities and in the evening.

On excursions, students and parents will be supervised by Major Oak Education staff. On these excursions the ratio will be no more than 1:25. If there are children under 12 in the group with out parents, then the ratio will be 1:15.

Students will be supervised at all times, with one exception - when the group have completed their excursion visit, the students may be given some free time. However, if the children are under 12, then this only happens on certain conditions:

- The children all have their parent or guardian with them;
- Clear limits are put on the area where they can go independently;

Major Oak Education staff and Tour operator share responsibility on the excursion. The Major Oak Education staff members and parents have the overall responsibility for the safety of the children on the excursion and for the itinerary. The Tour operator have responsibility for ensuring that all the members of the group are present and accounted for. For certain higher risk activities, swimming, climbing and archery etc., we use qualified staff for supervision, both on site or off site.





Managing Behaviour and Acceptable Restraint

(This has been formulated in accordance with Department for Education – Use of Reasonable Force 2011)

Physical contact with students must be appropriate for the age, understanding and sex of the child and must never threaten or be sexually inappropriate. In some cases physical contact may be appropriate:

To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;

- Prevent a students behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip;
- Prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the students to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another or to stop a fight;
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outburst.

You cannot:

- Use force as a punishment – it is unlawful to use force as a punishment.

What happens if a student complains if force is used on them?

- All complaints should be thoroughly investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- Major Oak Education must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a member of staff Major Oak Education will ensure that the member of staff has access to a named contact who can provide support.

Fire Safety

Fire safety is a legal requirement for all students. Please refer to our Health and Safety Policy. We work closely with our host universities to ensure that fire regulations are adhered to and that staff are briefed regarding what to do in the event of a fire.

