Safeguarding

Procedure

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1. Introduction

The following process and procedures should be read alongside "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE, 2023) and UCEM Code of Practice: Safeguarding and Prevent (opens new window).

The purpose of the following process and procedures is to ensure that children and vulnerable adults' rights are protected. All staff are obligated to be aware of the types of issues which may affect our students, and the following organisational, local, and statutory guidelines in the reporting of safeguarding concerns. **All staff at UCEM are responsible for the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns (i.e., a concern where a staff member believes a student is at risk of significant harm, abuse, or neglect).**

A flowchart explaining this procedure in one page can be found in section 5 of this document. Alternatively, if you need any additional help understanding this document, please contact safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk for support.

2. Definitions

- **Safeguarding-** The actions which we take and measures we put in place, guided by statutory obligations, to promote the welfare of students and protect them from harm.

- **Child-** In accordance with the Children Act (1989), a child is defined as a young person under the age of 18.

- **Vulnerable adult-** For the purpose of this process document, a vulnerable adult is someone who requires community care due to reasons of mental or other disabilities, age, or illness, and who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Please see Safeguarding example concerns and their definitions (opens new window).

3. Criteria

This procedure is applicable to all UCEM staff (including temporary staff), volunteers, students, apprentices, and trustees.

UCEM safeguards all its students, regardless of their age or any other protected characteristic. UCEM may also employ this procedure where it is made aware of concerns for the welfare of a child.

4. Guide to the Procedure

This procedure sets out how UCEM employees manage Safeguarding concerns about their students and/or employees. UCEM seeks to ensure all students are able to engage effectively and safely with their learning. If a member of staff is concerned that the physical or mental health of a student is affecting the student's learning, or that a student's studies are having a significant negative impact upon their wellbeing, then a concern should also be raised according to the Fitness to Study Procedure.

4.1 Timescales

Upon receipt/suspicion of a concern- Staff must report the concern immediately to the Safeguarding team wherever possible, arranging cover where needed to facilitate this. Where it is not physically possible to report immediately, a phone call should be made to the Safeguarding team on 01184672400. If the Safeguarding team is not available by telephone, an email should be sent to safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk, followed by a telephone call as soon as possible.

Upon Safeguarding team receipt of concern- The Safeguarding team will respond to all concerns within one working day.

4.2 Support available.

The Safeguarding team are available as a source of advice and guidance for staff, students, and employers (of apprentices). The Safeguarding team may also refer to external sources of support, which might include:

- Statutory partners (local authority, police, health care)

- Charities

- Links to literature/resources (online or elsewhere)

Support and guidance for staff on listening to Safeguarding concerns can be found in Section 7: Guidelines for Members of Staff.

4.3 Seeking consent to make referrals.

Wherever possible, the DSL will seek consent from a student before making a referral to statutory services.

There are some circumstances where it may be necessary for UCEM to make referrals without consent. These may include:

- Where there are serious concerns for the welfare of a child, and seeking consent may place the child in additional danger.

- Emergency or urgent situations where it is not possible to gain consent.

- Where making a referral without consent is necessary in order to prevent loss of life or serious physical, emotional or mental harm.

4.4 Outcomes of the procedure

Following a referral, the Safeguarding team will conduct an investigation. All stages of the case, from referral to closure, will be logged and stored within the single central record. Staff will be kept informed on a need to know basis. Possible outcomes of a safeguarding case might include:

- No action taken.

- Further monitoring required.

- Referral for additional support (see Section 4.2: Support Available for possible sources of support), with the impact of the support tracked and monitored.

- Referral to the Fitness to Study Procedure (opens new window)

- Disciplinary action which may lead to termination from programme/employment (where it is found that a learner/staff member has been found to have caused a safeguarding issue, or breached other UCEM policies/procedures)

5. Stages of the Procedure

5.1 Upon Receipt of Concerns

Anyone who suspects or learns of abuse or risk of significant harm of a child, or a vulnerable adult should report this to the Safeguarding team immediately, either by telephone (01184672400) or in person, followed by an email to **safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk**. An email alone is not sufficient. This responsibility extends to when someone has heard rumours of abuse or has suspicions with no firm evidence. This responsibility extends to all aspects of the learner's life, not just within the UCEM learning environment. Students can also contact the Safeguarding team for concerns about their own wellbeing.

For advice on recording concerns, please see section 6. The details for the Safeguarding team members can be found in Staff Responsibilities (opens new window).

Staff must also contact the DSL when they know or suspect that another staff member or student has a previous history of abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults, or if they have a concern of a current issue regarding a member of UCEM staff (including volunteers). Where a concern is raised about a member of staff, HR will be involved in any investigations.

Staff should never try and investigate an issue on their own, as they are not equipped or qualified to do so. An appropriate member of the Safeguarding team will investigate any safeguarding concerns, under the supervision and oversight of the DSL.

If staff have spoken to a member of the Safeguarding team and they have decided to take the matter further, staff will be asked to prepare a written report. This is essential in order to prevent misrepresentation of concerns. Staff should send their report (please see the Safeguarding Referral Form (opens new window) for a suggested report structure) to the DSL within 24 hours of the suspicion arising- email is acceptable. Reports should be factual, not including opinions or personal interpretations of facts. Include as much detail as possible, including physical signs or abuse or anything else which led to suspicious, or the account from the child or vulnerable adult, as accurately as possible. Staff must sign and date the report and store a copy in a secure place.

If staff need help writing a report, please contact safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk.

5.2 Allegations Against Staff

UCEM's primary concern is to ensure the safety of its students. In each case of suspected abuse by a member of staff, action should be taken quickly and professionally. There may be cases where a student will accuse a member of staff of abusing them. On occasion these allegations may be unfounded, but they may also be true.

In the event that a UCEM employee suspects another member of staff of abusing a student, they must report these concerns to the Safeguarding team. The DSL will liaise with HR and will:

- Report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and will seek and follow their advice.
- Take the necessary steps to ensure that the student is safe, as are any other students who may be at risk.

- Ensure that a report is completed by the person who originally reported the concern.
- Ensure that the necessary steps are in place in order to follow the advice of the LADO.

If the allegation of abuse concerns the DSL, this matter should be discussed with the Vice Principal- Student and Registry Services, in addition to following the normal safeguarding procedures outlined in this document.

5.3 Handling of Concerns

Upon receipt of a concern, a member of the Safeguarding team (either the DSL or a Safeguarding Officer) will conduct an investigation. The team will decide on the next steps, with oversight of the DSL (which might include not taking action). The DSL may seek advice from the LADO and agree further actions. Further actions might include:

- Seeking more advice from the social services or police
- Conducting further investigation under LADO direction, or supporting the investigation of the social services
- Referring to an appropriate agency
- Reporting the incident to a social worker
- Reporting the matter to the police if a crime is suspected.
- Providing ongoing internal support to the student

When a referral is made, this must be confirmed in writing to the appropriate agency within 24 hours.

The DSL may decide that it is appropriate for those involved to receive counselling. When necessary, the Safeguarding team can make arrangements.

5.4 Whistleblowing

Should a UCEM employee not be satisfied with the way that a Safeguarding case has been handled by the Safeguarding team, they are responsible for whistleblowing.
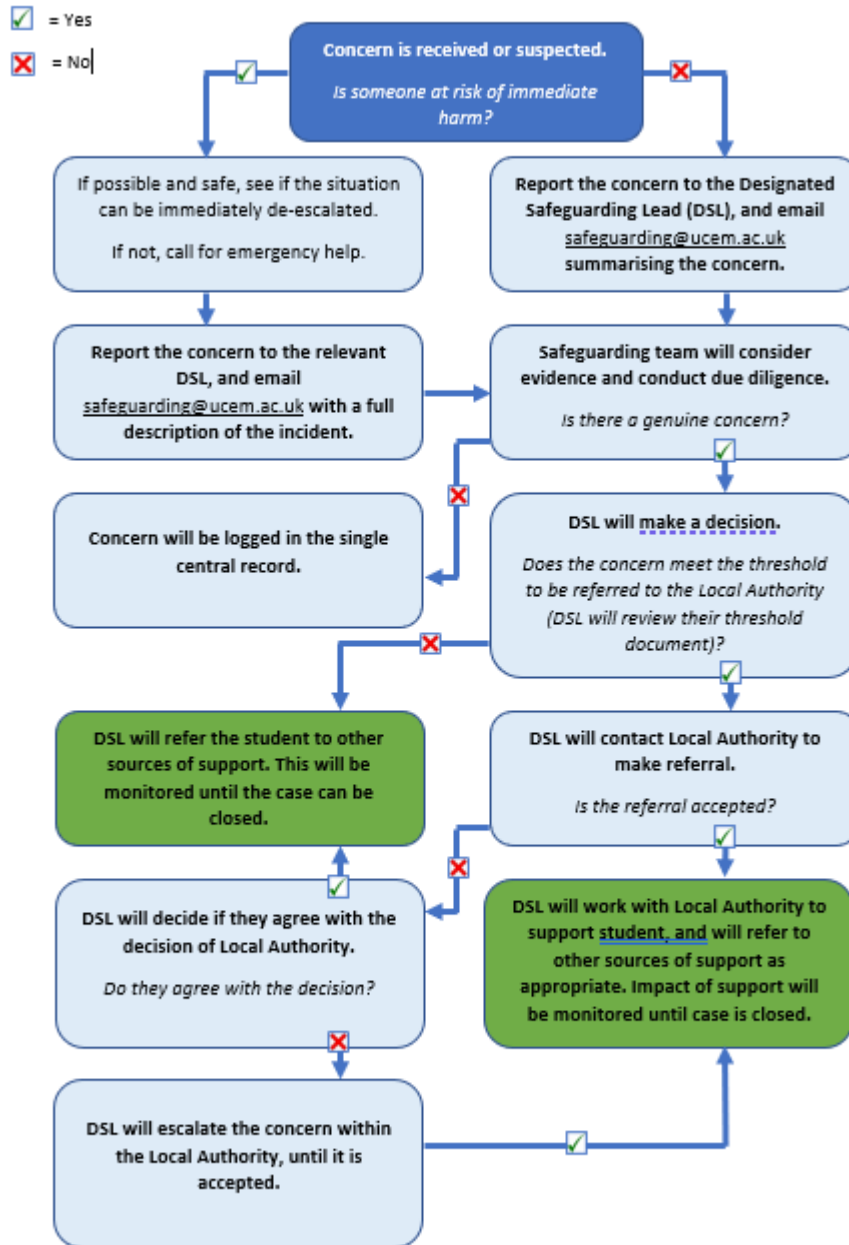
In the first instance, if an individual is concerned about the way that a Safeguarding case has been handled, they should discuss their concern with the Vice Principal- Student and Registry Services.

In the second instance, if an individual is still concerned there are two options:

- Employees- If they are not satisfied after discussion with the SLT DSL, employees can raise their concern initially to the Board of Trustee member with responsibility for Safeguarding. Details of the Board of Trustees member with responsibility for safeguarding can be found in the Staff Responsibilities appendix. If still not satisfied, concerns can be raised to the NSPCC whistleblowing service or directly to the Local Authority.

- Students- Students can raise whistleblowing concerns by contacting the Board of Trustees member with responsibility for safeguarding, details of whom can be found in the Staff Responsibilities appendix. Alternatively, concerns can be reported to the NSPCC whistleblowing service or directly to the Local Authority.

5.5 Flowchart explaining Safeguarding referral procedure.

☑ = Yes
☒ = No

Concern is received or suspected.

Is someone at risk of immediate harm?

If possible and safe, see if the situation can be immediately de-escalated.

If not, call for emergency help.

Report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and email safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk summarising the concern.

Report the concern to the relevant DSL, and email safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk with a full description of the incident.

Safeguarding team will consider evidence and conduct due diligence.

Is there a genuine concern?

Concern will be logged in the single central record.

DSL will make a decision.

Does the concern meet the threshold to be referred to the Local Authority (DSL will review their threshold document)?

DSL will refer the student to other sources of support. This will be monitored until the case can be closed.

DSL will contact Local Authority to make referral.

Is the referral accepted?

DSL will decide if they agree with the decision of Local Authority.

Do they agree with the decision?

DSL will work with Local Authority to support student, and will refer to other sources of support as appropriate. Impact of support will be monitored until case is closed.

DSL will escalate the concern within the Local Authority, until it is accepted.

(Image: Flowchart explaining the steps to the Safeguarding Procedure)

6. Training

Staff with responsibilities in relation to safeguarding will receive appropriate training in relation to their role(s), and all staff will be made aware of UCEM's Safeguarding Procedures. Training will be updated at recommended intervals, with DSL's and Safeguarding Officers receiving training at least every two years and other relevant staff receiving training at least every three years as directed. All staff will be expected to engage with updates and bulletins at least annually, to keep their knowledge up to date. New staff should ensure that they have completed Safeguarding and Prevent training prior to completion of their probationary period.

Temporary staff and/or volunteers working for UCEM must participate in Safeguarding and Prevent training and/or awareness raising. Where a temporary staff member/volunteer is working for UCEM for a period of more than a month, the staff member should complete the full Safeguarding and Prevent training available on the VLE. Where a temporary staff member and/or volunteer is expected to work for UCEM for a period of less than a month, they should meet with the DSL to go through expectations relating to Safeguarding and Prevent and should be supervised closely by their line manager.

7. Guidelines for Members of Staff

7.1 Listening to Concerns

Children or vulnerable adults may approach staff members to disclose apparent abuse or other safeguarding concerns. Staff must listen carefully and follow these guidelines:

- If a student is in immediate danger, advise them to contact the relevant emergency services in their area.
- Do not promise confidentiality. If the student does not wish to talk if you cannot promise confidentiality, reassure them that you are there if they wish to speak to you later. Ensure that you still report concerns to the Safeguarding team, even if a student does not wish to talk right now.
- Allow the person to talk without interruption, using their own words.
- Do not trivialise or exaggerate the issue.
- Do not make suggestions.
- Reassure them and let them know you are glad they have spoken to you, and that this is the right thing to do.
- Ask enough questions to clarify understanding, but never interrogate, coach, or probe. Do not ask leading questions.
- Be honest, and let the person know that you cannot keep the information secret.
- Remain calm- this is not easy for the student.
- Do not show emotions, this may discourage a student from talking.
- Let them know the matter will be taken seriously.
- Make sure that the student feels as safe and secure as possible.

The concern should be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding team by calling 01184672400, and emailing safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk. Cover for staff should be found to facilitate this if required.

Upon receipt of an allegation, the DSL may liaise with external agencies, and will record information about cases, collecting reports and notes as appropriate. Detailed information about a case will be confined to the Safeguarding team and any external agencies the DSL determines to engage. Staff will be kept informed on a 'need to know' basis of the progress of a case.

7.2   Recording Concerns

Following the receipt of safeguarding concerns, it is important that accurate notes are written down and sent to the Safeguarding team by emailing safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk. Staff may wish to use the Safeguarding Referral Form to ensure that they provide all of the relevant information. It is vital that accurate records are kept of any Safeguarding concerns. Staff should follow these guidelines when recording concerns:

- Record concerns accurately, using the exact language used in the conversation (to the best of your ability)

- Remember to include records of any questions you have asked the student, and their responses.

- Ensure records are written as soon as possible after you are made aware of any concerns- this helps to ensure accuracy.

- Ensure all records contain the name of the student that you are concerned about, the reasons for your concern, the dates, time, and location of any conversations that have taken place and details of anyone else present for the conversation.

7.3   Expected Conduct

UCEM sets out a standard of behaviour for all employees, which can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct. This includes a section on Safeguarding expectations, which can be found in Employee Code of Conduct (NC)- Part 1 (opens new window) and Employee Code of Conduct (NC)- Part 2: Safeguarding (opens new window).

8. Monitoring and Review

This document will be fully reviewed every 4 years as is UCEM's procedure. The Safeguarding team will also review the document at least annually to ensure compliance with legislation and other requirements, and the document will be approved by QSEC in this period if required.

9. Benchmarking/References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, procedures, and guidance documents, which set out details that relate to key aspects of UCEM's approach to safeguarding:

9.1   Students

- UCEM Code of Practice: Safeguarding and Prevent (opens new window)
- Employee Code of Conduct (NC)- Part 1 (opens new window);
- Employee Code of Conduct (NC)- Part 2: Safeguarding (opens new window);
- Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Procedure (opens new window);
- Online Safety Guidance (opens new window);

- [Prevent Procedure (opens new window)](#);
- [Online Protocol – A Student's Guide for the VLE (opens new window)](#);
- [UCEM Fitness to Study Procedure (opens new window)](#);
- [UCEM Code of Practice Chapter: Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning (relating to the recruitment of students with criminal convictions) - Higher Education Programmes (opens new window)](#);
- [UCEM Code of Practice Chapter: Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning (relating to the recruitment of students with criminal convictions) - Further Education Programmes (opens new window)](#)
- [UCEM Code of Practice: Student Appeals and Complaints (opens new window)](#)
- [UCEM Code of Practice Chapter: Neurodiversity Disability and Wellbeing (opens new window)](#);
- [Privacy Policy (opens new window)](#)
- [Data Protection Policy (opens new window)](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Policy (opens new window)](#);
- [External Speakers Policy (opens new window)](#);

9.2   Staff

- [IT Acceptable Use Policy - Staff (opens new window)](#);
- [Recruitment Policy - Part 1 (opens new window)](#)
- [Recruitment Policy – Part 2 (opens new window)](#)

Relevant for face-to-face sessions (on or off-site)

- [Health and Safety Policy and Procedures (opens new window)](#);

This policy has also been benchmarked against relevant statutory frameworks, which can be found in [Safeguarding and Prevent - Statutory Frameworks (opens new window).](#)