FORMISSION

Safeguarding Policy 2023-24

Version:	2	Policy Number:	28
Policy Owner:	Safeguarding Lead	Date of last revision:	12/04/2024
Authorised By:	SMT	Authorisation Date:	12/04/2024
Review Date:	31/8/2024	Place of Publication:	ForMission OneDrive ForMission Moodle

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Safeguarding Policy 2023-24

1. **Statement**
   1.1. ForMission recognises that it has a social, moral and legal responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable

adults who are engaged in any activities and services associated with ForMission.

1.2. This duty is the responsibility of all staff, contractors, volunteers and students. They should promote the welfare of all (including visitors) by being able to identify experience or risk of significant harm, reporting concerns quickly to the appropriate staff.

1.3. All concerns, suspicions and allegations of abuse, harm or risk of harm will be taken seriously and will receive a prompt response.

1.4. ForMission will ensure that any staff, contractors, students or volunteers who have substantial unsupervised, one-to-one contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure, usually at an enhanced level. A satisfactory check will need to be received by the College before the start of work or relevant activities on an unsupervised basis.

1.5. ForMission aims to provide a supportive and positive environment for learning and teaching. It is committed to ensuring that the rights of individuals are respected, and that each person is treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. Decisions made in accordance with this policy will seek to be proportionate, fair and consistent.

1.6. The Senior Management Team has management responsibility for this policy, and it is administered by Lydia English, who is the designated Safeguarding Lead.

2. **Purpose**

2.1. This policy and procedure explain how ForMission will safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, how it will respond to concerns, and what support will be made available.

2.2. The policy provides those at ForMission (staff, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and students) with clear guidance on how to identify risks and report concerns if they suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse.

2.3. Behaviours which can be a cause for action or concern in this context can include (but are not limited to):

2.3.1. Abuse (physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, domestic, financial, exploitative, neglect, abandonment)

2.3.2. Behaviours which cause harm to self or others

2.3.3. Forced (not arranged) marriage

2.3.4. Radicalisation under the terms of the Prevent agenda

2.3.5. Risk of suicide

2.4. This policy and associated procedure provide generic guidance for areas of the College which do not have their own specific procedures.

2.5. The College has specific procedures that deal with Academic Misconduct, student complaints, and the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures. If

after initial investigation, it appears that the issue falls within the scope of any of these policies, reclassification will be discussed, and the appropriate referral made.

2.6. This policy is not intended for 'whistleblowing'. Whistleblowing is where a disclosure is made which a person believes to be in the public interest about suspected wrongdoing in an organisation. The College has a separate procedure which should be followed in such circumstances.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy sets out ForMission's approach to safeguarding and provides guidance to staff and students on how it will respond to any concerns which are raised.

3.2. It reflects current legislation and takes account of the guidance and codes of practice issued by Government and statutory bodies.

3.3. During the course of their activities with ForMission, staff, contactors, volunteers and students may come into contact with children, young people or adults in vulnerable situations who are not members of ForMission. Examples of these activities include:

3.3.1. Teaching, supervision and support of staff and students

3.3.2. Work-based learning

3.3.3. Counselling

3.3.4. Summer schools and other events

3.3.5. Outreach activities

3.3.6. As research subjects

3.3.7. Attendance or participation at conferences or events run by ForMission

3.3.8. Children accompanying members of staff or students to work

3.3.9. Young people being registered as students at ForMission.

3.4. ForMission also acknowledges that it has a duty to prevent anyone (staff, contactors, volunteers or students) regardless of vulnerability or age, from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is held in balance with the commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom, both of which are essential principals of ForMission's mission and ethos.

4. Definitions

4.1. Child or young person: someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Child typically refers to those under the age of 18 who are still in full-time education, and 'young person' refers to those under the age of 18 who have left full-time education.

4.2. Vulnerable adult: generally regarded as someone over the age of 18 who needs additional protection or input to enable them to achieve their full potential. Examples can include (but are not limited to):

      4.2.1. Young people leaving local authority care or having been looked after children

      4.2.2. Carers who are unpaid, overburdened, under stress or isolated

      4.2.3. A person with a disability who has specific support needs which mean they are unable to protect themselves from the risk of harm or abuse

      4.2.4. A person who is, or has been, subjected to abuse

      4.2.5. Someone who is homeless or living in unsuitable temporary accommodation

      4.2.6. Women who are vulnerable due to isolating cultural factors

      4.2.7. Someone with an addiction, or who lives with a person who abuses drugs or alcohol

      4.2.8. A person who may be living in unsuitable, temporary accommodation or homeless

The presence of these factors in themselves does not make someone at risk but rather how the factors combine and manifest in the individual. The key factor is whether the individual is able to take steps to protect and promote their interests. The British Medical Association guidelines say:

"The term 'vulnerable adult' is contentious, and care must be taken to avoid using it pejoratively or in ways that undermine fundamental rights, interests or freedoms. A clear distinction must be drawn between adults who retain capacity to make decisions and those whose capacity has been lost or impaired."

4.3. Safeguarding: this relates to the action taken to promote the welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to protect them from harm.

4.4. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service): This is a statutory body which helps employers to make safer decisions in preventing unsuitable people from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

4.5. Radicalisation: A process by which an individual or group comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Radicalisation can be both violent and non-violent. The College has responsibilities under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, or the Prevent Duty, to prevent individuals within its community from being drawn into terrorism.

4.6. Staff/all staff: in terms of this policy, this means all those who undertake work for the College, whether paid staff, contractors, or volunteers.

4.7. Hub Leaders: at any location where there is no Hub Leader, the most senior person who is usually based at that location becomes the relevant person under this policy.

4.8. Member of ForMission: anyone who comes under the banner of ForMission, whether Trustee, staff, contractor, volunteer, or student.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for safeguarding and for ensuring that robust arrangements are in place.

5.2. The Senior Management Team will:

    5.2.1. Provide the strategic lead in relation to safeguarding matters

    5.2.2. Be accountable for all safeguarding policy and practice

    5.2.3. Ensure that the policy is monitored and reviewed in line with developments in legislation, guidance and best practice

    5.2.4. Maintain confidential records of any cases

5.3. All members of ForMission have responsibility for safeguarding. Those who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust and have a duty of care to act if there is a cause for concern and should:

    5.3.1. Understand what abuse is

    5.3.2. Listen carefully to children, young people and vulnerable adults

    5.3.3. Guard against putting children, young people, vulnerable adults (or anyone else) at risk of harm

    5.3.4. Remain aware that they are in a position of trust with regard to these groups

    5.3.5. Be aware of and act in accordance with this safeguarding policy and procedure

    5.3.6. Participate in appropriate safeguarding and Prevent Duty training made available by ForMission

    5.3.7. Consult with and take advice from ForMission's Prevent contact where there is reason to believe that a student to whom this policy applies may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism

    5.3.8. Record any concerns they have and give the record to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately

    5.3.9. Deal with the disclosure of abuse in line with the Code of Good Practice at Appendix A

5.4. The designated staff for Safeguarding matters are:

    5.4.1. Lydia English, Safeguarding Lead

Responsible for safeguarding matters concerning staff, agency staff, contractors, volunteers and students
Tel: 0121 458 5240
Email: lydiaenglish@formission.org.uk

    5.4.2. Jennifer MacKay, Undergraduate Administrator

Responsible for carrying out DBS checking
Tel: 07984 149324 (work mobile)
Email: jennifermackay@formission.org.uk

5.5. The designated staff will:

5.5.1. Offer an initial point of contact, should any student or staff member have any concerns relating to safeguarding

5.5.2. Highlight and champion best practice relating to safeguarding

5.5.3. Ensure that appropriate safeguarding training takes place, and that safeguarding is readily available to all staff, contractors, volunteers and students.

5.6. In instances where a concern relates to possible radicalisation and/or extremism as defined by the Prevent Duty, the designated safeguarding staff will consult with the Prevent Lead, who will consider what action is necessary (including referral to external bodies).

6. **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour**

6.1. All staff, contractors, volunteers and students must be alert and active in safeguarding and ensuring the welfare of those they come into contact with during the course of their role at ForMission. Concerns should be taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

6.2. Allegations, concerns or suspicions of abuse or harm should be raised immediately with one of the designated staff members. Examples of incidents or situations that should be reported would include those where a child, young person or vulnerable adult:

6.2.1. Is accidentally hurt

6.2.2. Is involved in a relationship that has developed in a way which raises concern that it may be an abuse of trust

6.2.3. Seems to be become attracted to you or to a colleague in a way which worries you

6.2.4. Seems to have misunderstood or misinterpreted something you have said or done in a way that leads them to believe you are attracted to them

6.2.5. Has had to be physically restrained by you to prevent them from harming themselves or others or from causing significant damage to property

6.2.6. Makes allegations of abuse to you regarding another member of the ForMission community

6.2.7. Reports alleged abuse to you of another member of their family who is a child, young person, or vulnerable adult

6.2.8. Has suspicious or unexplained marks or injuries

6.2.9. Makes allegations regarding inappropriate behaviour towards them either within or outside their contact with ForMission

6.3. The designated safeguarding staff undertake to listen to any concerns raised with them in a sensitive and confidential manner. The identity of the person raising the concern will not be disclosed to the person who is the subject of

the concern, though this protection may be withdrawn if it transpires that the concern was not raised in good faith.

6.4. Members of ForMission should not attempt to investigate concerns or allegations themselves. This is the responsibility of external authorities.

6.5. Members of ForMission should not normally make referrals to external authorities themselves other than in consultation with the designated safeguarding staff. This does not override any responsibility to report concerns to relevant professional bodies, but it should normally be done in consultation with ForMission's Senior Management Team, who will normally consult with the appropriate external authority where necessary.

6.6. Where there is a significant risk of harm from a member of staff, contractor, volunteer or student, the Senior Management Team will take steps to suspend the individual responsible while investigations are carried out.

6.7. Where the risk or concern is immediate and significant and a designated safeguarding member of staff cannot be contacted, the person reporting the concern may contact the relevant external authority directly for advice.

6.8. If a member of ForMission other than designated safeguarding staff makes a referral to an external authority, then they must notify one of safeguarding staff that they have done so as soon as reasonably possible.

6.9. In the majority of situations there will not be a report back to the person who has raised the concern. If it is possible to report back to them that their concern has been investigated and found to be baseless, then this will happen, but if this does not happen, it does not necessarily mean that the concern was verified. In the majority of cases, it is very likely that the person who raised the concern will not see any action occurring. This does not mean that no action is taking place; rather that the case is being handled in the strictest confidence.

6.10. In many cases where a concern has been raised, there may be no immediate intervention required. However, the line manager or relevant safeguarding officer, together with the person who first raised the concern, should regularly review the situation and keep a 'watching brief'. Agreement should be made on what may lead to an escalation and further action.

6.11. This policy assumes that no concern will be raised without a genuine reason. Where concerns are raised in good faith, there will be no reprisal, even if they are subsequently found to be mistaken. However, should concerns be raised vexatiously or maliciously, the person making the report will be investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

7. Dealing with Historic Convictions ('Blemished Disclosures')

7.1. New students applying to study with ForMission College are required to undertake a DBS check. New staff (including contractors and volunteers) may be required to undertake a DBS depending on the nature of their role (i.e. how closely they will be working with children or vulnerable adults). This will be determined by SMT/Safeguarding Lead.

7.1.1. Staff who have safeguarding oversight are required to undertake a DBS.

7.1.2. Staff who require a DBS check will be notified by the Safeguarding Lead/SMT.

7.2. Where a DBS reveals a historic conviction(s) or a caution, otherwise known as blemished disclosures, each DBS will be looked at individually by the college Safeguarding Lead and designated safeguarding lead from the SMT. Action is taken at this stage to check whether any applicant is unsuitable to work with children and/or vulnerable adults. Staff can refer to the following document for help: Blemished Disclosures Advice

7.3. Staff will use the following guidelines to assess whether an individual poses a safeguarding risk:

7.3.1. If the convicted offence has taken place within the last three years.

7.3.2. If the applicant has served a prison sentence.

7.3.3. The nature and age of the offence will be taken into account. Minor convictions committed more than three years ago will, typically, not be investigated further. Fuller investigations can be done using this risk assessment template.

7.4. In the case of student applicants, investigations will typically be done in conjunction with their work-based learning provider.

7.5. In the case of staff applicants, investigations will typically be done in conjunction with their current employer.

7.6. If the applicant is on the 'Barred List' under no circumstances should they be allowed to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

8. **Safeguarding When Working Online**

8.1. When working online, it is essential that safeguarding procedures are adhered to. Please also refer to the policy on zoom etiquette.

8.2. Staff should consider the following when engaging with students in an online setting:

8.2.1. Ensure the environment is suitable for both tutor and learner. Discourage online calls from bedrooms where possible

8.2.2. Appropriate clothing should be worn

8.2.3. Adhering to professional behaviour online (appropriate staff behaviour should be the same as an in-person setting)

8.2.4. Ensure call security by keeping passwords/login details private and enabling waiting room option

8.2.5. Any disclosures made online by students to staff should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead

8.2.6. If staff notice anything of concern on the call, this can be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead and further action taken if necessary

8.2.7. If students are at immediate risk, call 999

9. Reporting to External Authorities

9.1. ForMission may be under an obligation to pass on concerns to relevant professional bodies/agencies under certain circumstances.

9.2. Such a referral will normally be made by the designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Training

10.1. At least two members of the Senior Management Team will undertake safeguarding training, refreshed at regular intervals. This will also be the case for the Professional Services Manager.

10.2. Safeguarding training and refresher sessions will be delivered regularly, at staff training days, in line with best practice guidance.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

11.1. The designated staff will record any incidents relating to safeguarding concerns and will report them (in anonymised form) to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. This report will be confidential and if any concerns or patterns of abuse emerge, these will be dealt with appropriately.

12. Policy Review

12.1. The designated safeguarding staff will review and update this policy and associated procedure, in particular with reference to the legal obligations and other external requirements. It will be reviewed annually.

12.2. The relevant policies and procedures which this policy should be considered in conjunction with are found in Appendix B.

13. Appendix A: Code of Good Practice in Handling Disclosures and Allegations

13.1. If a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes an allegation or discloses information about a situation where abuse is suspected, please follow these guidelines:

13.1.1. React in a calm and considered way, whilst showing concern

13.1.2. Reassure the individual, that it is right for them to share the information and that they are not responsible for what happened

13.1.3. Take seriously what they have to say

13.1.4. Do not interrogate the individual but ask questions for clarification to ascertain whether there is a concern that needs to be reported

13.1.5. Listen to the individual and do not interrupt while they are recounting significant events

13.1.6. Offer reassurance that the problem can be dealt with

13.1.7. Do not give assurances of confidentiality but explain that you will need to pass the information to those who need to know

13.1.8. Make a comprehensive record of what is said and done as soon as possible after speaking to the individual (and before leaving work for the day). Keep all original notes as they may be needed as evidence. The comprehensive record should include:

13.1.8.1. A verbatim record of what the individual says has occurred, in their own words. This record may be needed later in any criminal trial and should therefore be as accurate as possible

13.1.8.2. Details of the allegation or concern

13.1.8.3. A description of any injury. Note, however, that you must not remove or disarrange a person's clothing to inspect any injuries

13.1.8.4. Dates, times, places, and any other information that may be helpful in investigating the allegation.

13.2. The incident, allegation or concern should be reported immediately to the designated Safeguarding Lead.

13.3. Members of ForMission must not investigate allegations or suspicions of abuse themselves. Where the Senior Management Team believes that it is appropriate to do so, the concerns will be reported to the Police or Social Services.

14. Appendix B: Relevant Policies and Procedures

14.1. The policies and procedures which it may be appropriate to refer to when handling a safeguarding issue are:

14.1.1. Academic regulations

14.1.2. Admissions Policy

14.1.3. Bullying and Harassment Policy

14.1.4. Data Protection Policy

14.1.5. Equal Opportunities Policy

14.1.6. Fitness to Study Policy

14.1.7. Health and Safety Policy

14.1.8. Prevent Policy

14.1.9. Whistleblowing procedure