

SU GUIDANCE ON SAFEGUARDING FOR STUDENT GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

Many students in Cambridge are volunteering their time to support children (anyone under 18) through various outreach activities such as access work. Any organisation that is involved in working with children should be following the principles of safeguarding to ensure best practice is followed.

This guidance is to signpost students to the necessary resources so that they can create and follow their own safeguarding processes. This guidance does not replace important safeguarding training but rather aims to provide students with the tools to access this themselves. There may be costs associated with some elements of the safeguarding procedures which can be alleviated through University, College or [SU support](#) if necessary.

It is important to note that this guidance is based on NSPCC safeguarding in England only. If you are working with children in any other region, please seek further guidance from the [NSPCC website](#).

SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

What is Safeguarding and Child Protection?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcome

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on the actions taken to protect individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer harm. Information on what to do should this situation arise should be laid out in your Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

A child is defined as someone who is under the age of 18. Whilst they may behave like an adult, legally if they are under the age of 18 they are considered to be a child.

Safeguarding and its practices also apply to adults at risk. An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of

their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 [England]). For further guidance on safeguarding practices for Adults at Risk please refer to the Care Act 2014 or your Local Authority Guidance.

What are the Safeguarding Principles?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility! Not just those leading or organising events. You should never promise to keep a secret or ignore a concern!

Six Key Principles of Safeguarding

1. **Empowerment:** Where there is a concern about a child, they should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions on next steps and, where possible, gaining their informed consent when the concern needs to be escalated. However, if you do not have consent and they do not wish to engage with you further, this should not prevent you from reporting the concern using your procedure.
2. **Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs. This includes staff and volunteers receiving appropriate training, having a clear and accessible safeguarding policy and procedure on how to report a concern, and having in place child protection practices for activities such as a Code of Conduct or Behaviour for those participating in the activity.
3. **Proportionality:** Taking the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. Any action taken following the disclosure of or witnessing of a concern should be informed by your safeguarding policy and procedure. Not all concerns and reports will need to be made to the Police, it may be more suitable to raise concerns with the child's school (if you are working in partnership with them) or with the child's guardians or parents where it would not put them at risk of abuse or harm. If unsure, you can get further guidance from the NSPCC. If there is immediate threat to life or of harm you should call the emergency services on 999 straight away.
4. **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need. Any child can experience abuse or harm and those who are victims of abuse, need to be provided with the support and protection they need to prevent further harm.
5. **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Never work in isolation or fail to pass on information where you have a concern about a child's wellbeing or welfare. Forming partnerships with key stakeholders helps to ensure successful child protection by allowing everyone to work together to quickly identify abuse and take action to prevent further abuse.
6. **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. Everyone is responsible for ensuring the safeguarding and protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Accountability is taking responsibility for our actions and ensuring we remain aware of abusive behaviours and how to report safeguarding concerns when they arise.

Safeguarding and Reporting

Your safeguarding policy and procedure should provide clear information on who to report a safeguarding concern to and how to report a safeguarding concern. If you are unsure and the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable you can contact the NSPCC for further guidance.

When it comes to safeguarding and reporting the **Four R's** are what should be followed:

- **Recognise** possible abuse: you first need to recognise there is a safeguarding concern. You need to know what abuse is, what to look out for and be vigilant at all times. This information should be attained through appropriate safeguarding training.
- **Respond** appropriately: You need to respond to possible concerns. Sometimes a concern is obvious and sometimes it is not. It is important to respond when a child tells you that something bad is happening in their lives, or someone else tells you. Not all children at risk will tell someone what is happening to them, so if you see or hear anything that could be a concern for them, you must respond quickly.
- **Report** your concerns or refer and pass on information to the appropriate person or organisation. By doing this, you begin the process of making sure that you or your organisation is doing everything it can to keep the child safe and giving them all the support they need.
- **Record** your observations: You need to record your observations, your concerns and the actions you and others have or have not taken. When recording remain factual and where possible use the exact words of the person who disclosed or reported the concern to you.

If you are ever in doubt on what action you should take please contact your Designated Safeguarding Lead or the NSPCC for further guidance: help@NSPCC.org.uk or you can visit their [website](#).

When is Safeguarding Needed?

In-Person and Online

Safeguarding procedures are needed in any circumstance that involves working with children or at risk adults; online and in-person. Due to the different environments in the real and virtual worlds, you will need clear procedures on how you will protect children from harm in both of these situations.

If you are only working with children in one of these settings, you will still need clear guidance to ensure contact does not occur within the other. For instance, if you are only planning to hold an in-person event with children, you will need procedures to ensure that children and volunteers/workers cannot contact each other virtually. This may take the form of a Code of Conduct or Behaviour which

highlights what actions should and should not be taken when interacting with children.

If you are planning on actively working with children online, then you should ensure you have completed further training on safeguarding online communities.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Every organisation working with children and young people needs a designated safeguarding lead who any reports or disclosures can be escalated to. This person takes the lead on ensuring that the group or organisation has appropriate arrangements for the safeguarding of children.

This person can be a student and will likely have a formalised role within the group. They will be responsible for the safeguarding training and procedures of other members of the group, and be the primary point of contact for safeguarding within the organisation. If the group is working with other groups or institutions (i.e. schools) they will also work closely with their safeguarding leads.

Example role description: [role-description-for-child-protection-lead.pdf](#)

FURTHER RESOURCES

Safeguarding Checklist

This list can be used to track that you have all the necessary procedures in place. There are linked examples for each of these resources:

- ☐ [Safeguarding policy for children](#)
- ☐ [Online safety policy statement](#)
- ☐ [Safeguarding procedure](#)
- ☐ [Code of Conduct for events](#)
- ☐ [Designated safeguarding lead](#)
- ☐ [NSPCC safeguarding training for anyone working with children](#)

Other NSPCC Recommendations

- [Writing safeguarding policies and procedures](#)
- [NSPCC online courses and training](#)
- [A step-by-step guide for the voluntary and community sector](#)
- [Are they safe? Creating safeguarding procedures wallchart](#)
- [Safeguarding examples: issues and concerns | NSPCC Learning](#)
- Recommendations for NSPCC Training
 - <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/resources>
 - <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/>

Financial Support from the SU

Some safeguarding procedures, such as training, require payment. If you need financial assistance accessing these services then you can apply to the Student-Led Outreach Grant which is available for all students at Cambridge.

You should outline the amount of money you are requesting, and how you will use it regarding your outreach work. Please see the application form [here](#). You must log in with your CRSID to access the form.

LIABILITY

Please note that this guidance exists to signpost to pre-existing NSPCC resources. Cambridge SU is not liable for the safeguarding of children under this guidance.

Reviewed 09/2026 by:

Cambridge SU Advice & Welfare Manager