

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Cambridge SU's objects as a charity are:

1. The advancement of the education of Students at the University of Cambridge for the public benefit by:
 - 1.1. promoting the interests and welfare of Students at the University of Cambridge during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising Students;
 - 1.2. being the recognised representative channel between Students and the University of Cambridge and any other external bodies; and
 - 1.3. providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of Students; and
2. The promotion of equality of opportunity in education for the public benefit by in particular:
 - 2.1. promoting access to, and success at, the University of Cambridge and its affiliated institutions; and
 - 2.2. encouraging access to the University of Cambridge for applicants from backgrounds underrepresented in the University.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Cambridge SU's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Cambridge SU, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

REASONS FOR HAVING THIS POLICY

Safeguarding children may also be known as child protection. For the purposes of this policy a child is anyone under 18 years of age.

All public-facing staff may come into contact with children as part of their work. This may be incidental contact, where a student is accompanied by children, a student may be a child, or Cambridge SU may deliver services targeted at children.

It is essential that proper guidelines are in place to ensure that staff deal appropriately with situations in which children may be at risk.

The Cambridge SU follows guidance on child safeguarding issues set out by the NSPCC.

Cambridge SU identifies several situations where children may be at increased risk of harm:

- Deaf or disabled.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Running away.
- Domestic violence.
- Mental health problems.

In addition, the NSPCC have identified specific forms of abuse which may be perpetrated against a child. These are:

- Bullying.
- Emotional abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Child trafficking.
- Neglect.
- Sexual abuse.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SCREENING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, whenever it was committed, is not considered suitable to work for Cambridge SU.

Any other convictions must be considered on an individual basis.

Cambridge SU must have sound recruitment practices in place to ensure that anyone considered to be a risk to children is not employed by the union. The following precautions will reduce this risk:

- Anyone applying to work or volunteer for Cambridge SU will be interviewed and asked to provide two references from former employers.
- If an applicant is unable to provide employer references, they will be asked to provide references from alternative sources, such as volunteer managers, community leaders or other appropriate people.

- Anyone who is selected for an interview with Cambridge SU will be asked to disclose details of any unspent convictions.
- Cambridge SU must get an enhanced DBS check for all eligible roles.
- Thorough induction training will be provided to ensure that staff / volunteers are aware of the union's core values and good practice in working with students.
- Staff and volunteers will be given regular supervision and have their training needs assessed.
- Any unusual or excessive contact with a child will be investigated.
- Staff whose work is specifically targeted at children will have an enhanced DBS check.

In addition, the following roles will be DBS checked:

- Staff and Sabbs responsible for administering or coordinating any projects that involve contact with children.
- Student Advice Service Advisers
- Those with direct line management responsibilities for the above
- Any staff member whose role changes to incorporate any of the above conditions.

Re-screening will take place every three years.

PROCEDURE WHERE ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE AGAINST A 3RD PARTY

The person responsible for dealing with allegations of abuse against a child is:
The Advice and Welfare Manager

If they are not available, the deputy is: The Deputy CEO, followed by the CEO

In the event that neither responsible person can be contacted, the adviser must speak to their Line Manager.

- When an allegation is made, the staff member should take careful notes of what is said and must not ask any questions which seem to be "leading". The staff member should tell the person making the allegation that the staff member will discuss this with the Advice and Welfare Manager. They should also be told that, although the Advice & Welfare Manager will not automatically report the allegation, this may happen.

- The staff member must make a note of the time and date that the allegation was made, who made it and the nature of the allegation.
- The staff member must record only the facts, preferably in the language/words used by the person making the allegation.
- The staff member must then report the allegation to the Advice and Welfare Manager immediately.
- If the person making the allegation indicates that they are willing to report the allegation to social services or the police, then Cambridge SU should offer to assist the individual to make contact with the relevant authorities.
- Cambridge SU must not participate in any form of "investigation".
- Where the person making the allegation (whether they be a child, student or an adult alleging third-party abuse) refuses to allow disclosure of the allegation, the staff member must contact the CEO who will discuss all the information available to you in context of this policy.
- The CEO will then contact the NSPCC to determine whether there is a real risk which should be referred to the statutory authorities.
- If Cambridge SU is subsequently required to take part in a criminal investigation or a Serious Case Review, the CEO must contact the University HR and Legal departments for advice.

PROCEDURE WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

Staff and volunteers may come across instances where they suspect that a child may be being abused. The child may be the student. Alternatively, there may be a suspicion that an adult student is perpetrating child abuse, or a student may disclose this.

The person responsible for dealing with suspicions of abuse against a child is:
The Advice and Welfare Manager

If they are not available, the deputy is: The Deputy CEO, followed by the CEO

In the event that neither responsible person can be contacted, the adviser must speak to their Line Manager.

Cambridge SU will follow this procedure:

- Ensure that all the information that the staff member would usually collect in the course of dealing with the presenting issue is collected and recorded.

- Be clear why you think child abuse may be happening.
- Find out whether the child is supported by other agencies e.g. social worker.
- Ensure that local information sources are comprehensive and up to date, so that appropriate referrals can be made.
- Contact the Advice & Welfare Manager to discuss the best option for the student or a child who may be being abused by the student. This discussion may include contacting the NSPCC for a “what if” conversation before making a final decision to report suspicions.
- If there is a clear and immediate danger to a child, then priority must be given to the safety of that child, which may include reporting the suspicion without their consent, thus breaching confidentiality.

SAFEGUARDING BEHAVIOURS

Cambridge SU takes measures to ensure that all students and members of the public who come into contact with the union are protected from any form of harm or abuse and to minimise the risk of staff having allegations made against them.

The steps taken to do this will apply to working with all students, but for clarity, examples specific to children are listed here:

- Staff will not look after children out of sight of a parent or carer.
- Be aware that a person under the age of 18 is legally a child, even if they look and express themselves like an adult.
- Where possible, arrange for activities involving a child working with an adult to take place in a room which can be easily observed by others, this needs to be balanced with potential confidentiality concerns.
- A staff member must never visit a child in their home unaccompanied.
- Staff and volunteers must never transport a child in their car unless prior arrangements have been made or in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency, where this is appropriate.
- Anyone working on a project specifically aimed at those under the age of 18 must have had an enhanced DBS check.
- Anyone working in a childcare setting, regardless of the target client group, must have had an enhanced DBS check.

- Staff and volunteers must never make any comments which may be interpreted as sexual in nature, to a child
- A child must never be allowed into a staff member's home.
- Cambridge SU must adopt sound recruitment practices which aim to prevent anyone considered to be a risk to children from working within the union.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in any physical games with a child - apart from structured sports activities which may be part of a community event etc.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in sexually provocative games.
- Staff and volunteers must not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- If a child is distressed, offer comfort with words rather than touching them.
- The content of conversations must be professional and pertinent to the work of the union.
- Staff and volunteers must not let allegations that a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Staff and volunteers must not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Staff and volunteers must not take photographs of children.

TRAINING

Cambridge SU will ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is available to all staff and volunteers. This may be in the form of:

- policy awareness sessions delivered internally
- briefing sessions by Local Authority or other relevant authority
- attendance at training arranged through partner agencies
- additional training.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Any new services in development will take account of the need to safeguard children. This may be achieved by:

- Risk assessing proposed activities.
- Agreeing safeguarding measures with partner organisations including information sharing protocols.
- Seeking specialist advice, for example from the local safeguarding children board.

Date of next review: August 2023