

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Addendum for Exceptional Closure Periods

The following guidance and procedures are to be used alongside the South Essex College's [Safeguarding Policy & Procedure](#) when there is exceptional closure period.

1. Procedure Statement

In the event of a whole college closure the best interest of children, young people and vulnerable adults will continue to come first at South Essex College of Further & Higher Education. The College's Senior Leadership Team will follow any national or local guidance leading up to and during closure periods putting the safety of students and staff as the highest priority.

All staff must continue to act immediately if they are concerned for the safety of a student. The College will ensure that a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL and/or members of the College's Safeguarding & Pastoral Team are available to staff, students, parents/carers and external agencies to provide support and guidance with concerns and referrals.

The procedure below outlines how the College will meet its statutory duty to safeguarding all students during exceptional closure periods.

2. Exceptional Closure Periods

The College defines an 'Exceptional Closure Period' as incidents or circumstances that impact on the business of the college resulting in the closure of all or some buildings. This will include adverse weather or government advised closures such as COVID-19.

The closure periods during bank holidays, Easter holiday and Christmas break are not covered by this procedure as normal working patterns occur either side of the holidays. Any person with an immediate concern for a person's safety that fall outside of the College working hours/days should use the contact details listed below for the Local Authority Social Care teams and the Police.

3. Site and Building Closures

The College's Critical Incident Team will be the lead management group in deciding on the closure of any College buildings including any reduction of services to students and staff such as partial closure of sites or buildings.

Decisions will be based on advice and guidance from national and local government offices with the health and safety of all students and staff being put first. The Senior Leadership Team will approve the final decision on building closures with liaison with the College's Corporation Chair as appropriate.

4. Staff & Volunteer responsibilities

All staff and volunteers continue to have a responsibility to safeguarding our students and this responsibility remains during closure periods. Staff must act immediately and refer any concerns

through to the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team as stated in the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure (Appendix 3: Child Protection & Adults At Risk Flowchart – [Link for Staff](#)).

All staff will receive communication at the start of any closure period on how to refer cases that will include email, telephone numbers and academic system notifications such as through ProMonitor.

5. Referring a concern

Staff, students, parents/carers, professionals or members of the public should send their concerns directly to the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team via email to Safeguarding@Southessex.ac.uk

Details of the concerns, contact details for the person referring and contact details of the student should be included in the referral to inform the risk assessment, necessary support and any external referral.

Staff can find more information in the Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 3: Child Protection & Adults At Risk Flowchart – [Link for Staff](#)).

6. Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

The Head of Safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the College with the Safeguarding & Pastoral Manager as Deputy. The DSL and Deputy are Level 3 trained and can provide guidance and support on any safeguarding concerns. The DSL and Deputy can be contacted via Safeguarding@Southessex.ac.uk

In incidents where the DSL and/or Deputy are unable to fulfil their duties the Assistant Principal Student Experience, Deputy Principal & Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources will take the role of DSL in close liaison with the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team to continue to offer the same level of service and support.

7. Safeguarding & Pastoral Team Arrangements

The Safeguarding & Pastoral Team will offer a remote service to all students and staff during any closure periods. All staff are trained to Level 2/3 and are able to refer cases as well as offer support and guidance. All staff are issued with a mobile phone to ensure they can safely contact students, parents/carers, staff and external agencies.

The Team can be contacted initially via email Safeguarding@Southessex.ac.uk where an assessment of the referral will be made with follow-up contact by email or phone as appropriate.

8. Tracking of Interventions and Ongoing Risk Assessments

All referrals in and out of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team will be recorded centrally and will be closely monitored by the Head of Safeguarding and the Safeguarding & Pastoral Manager. The Safeguarding & Pastoral Team will use a RAG rating system to risk assess individuals and support referrals as well as levels of support required.

9. Safeguarding & Supporting Looked After Children and Vulnerable Students

The College will use the following definition to identify vulnerable students: “*Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).*”

(Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on vulnerable children and young people:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>)

‘Students with a social worker’ include Looked After Children, those with a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan. These students will be supported by the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team during exceptional closure periods. The Team will liaise with parents, carers and professionals to ensure the safety of the young person.

Students with an EHCP will be risk-assessed by the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team to decide the appropriate level of support required. ALS staff will use a RAG rating system to risk assess individuals with an EHCP and refer for intervention as appropriate. The ALS Team will liaise with parents/carers and the Local Authority to review support and external service involvement. The Learning & Progression academic department will work in close liaison with the ALS Team to ensure their students are appropriately supported. (See Section 16 for contact details and external links.)

10. Safeguarding & Supporting all students

The College recognises that all students can become vulnerable during closure periods. Students who have accessed the Safeguarding service at College will be risk assessed and contacted as necessary. Close liaison with Academic Heads of Department, Curriculum Heads, Additional Learning Support and the Funding Team will support the work of safeguarding everyone.

The Safeguarding & Pastoral Team are available to all students and will provide a range of advice and guidance through the VLE and website as well as being available via email and phone.

11. Online safety

All staff are responsible for ensuring students are safe online by promoting good online safety and digital citizenship. Advice and guidance will be provided to all students and staff via our VLE on how to keep safe online and how to report any concerns into the College or external services.

12. Peer on Peer Abuse

During periods of exceptional closure the College’s Safeguarding Policy will remain the key document for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. This is the case for peer on peer abuse cases but the College recognises that providing a ‘normal’ service will be difficult during exceptional closure periods. The DSL and Deputy will lead on any peer on peer abuse cases ensuring there is strong communication with all parties and external agencies as required.

The College will continue to treat cases of peer on peer abuse seriously and will be dealt with under the Student Behaviour Improvement Policy & Procedure where both students study at the College.

Reports of peer on peer abuse should follow the normal child protection and adults at risk as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure - Appendix 3: Child Protection & Adults At Risk Flowchart – [Link for Staff](#).

Staff can get more information in Appendix 6: Guidelines for Dealing with cases of Peer on Peer Abuse of the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure – [Link for Staff](#).

13. Allegations against Staff

If anyone has a concern about a member of staff and/or any risk they pose to children, young people or vulnerable adults should contact the Head of Human Resources who will respond to the concern.

Email: DepartmentofHumanResources@Southessex.ac.uk

Local Authority Designated Officers

Reports or concerns regarding staff who pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults can also be made to the Local Authority Designated Officers.

Southend-on-Sea

Tel: 01702 534 539

Email: safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk

Essex

Tel: 03330 139 797

Email: childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk

Thurrock

Tel: 01375 652 921

Email: LADO@thurrock.gcsx.gov.uk

14. Local Authority Safeguarding Teams

The Local Authorities remain the safeguarding partner responsible for safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Team will remain in contact with allocated Social Workers and refer cases as needed into the MASH Teams. The contacts for the Local Authority Social Care Teams are below including out of hours telephone details.

Southend-on-Sea

Tel: 01702 215007

Out of Hours: 0345 606 1212

Essex

Tel: 0345 603 7627

Out of Hours: 0345 606 1212

Thurrock

Tel: 01375 652 802

Out of Hours: 01375 372 468

15. Police

The Safeguarding Team will continue to work in partnership with the Police to safeguard students. Anyone can report a crime to the Police and the contact details are below.

Emergency 999

Non-emergency 101

Crime non-urgent report: <https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

Missing Person non-urgent report: <https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/mp/report-missing-person/>

Police Child Abuse Team

Tel: 01277 266 822

16. SEND External Support

For any student with a special education need or disability the links below will provide information and further support. As outlined in Section 9, the Additional Learning Support Team will put plans in place to assess the support needs of students with an EHCP during exceptional closure periods. The Team can be contacted via email: AdditionalLearningSupport@southessex.ac.uk where a member of the team will be able to advise on a case by case basis.

Essex Local Authority

Link to SEND re COVID 19: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/changes-services/schools-learning>

Link to Local Offer page: <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/>

Southend Local Authority

Link to Local Offer overview:

https://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200225/children_with_disabilities/594/local_offer_-_send

Link to Live Well Website: <https://livewellsouthend.com/kb5/southendonsea/directory/home.page>

Thurrock Local Authority

Link to Education and Training Page: <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/education-and-learning>

Link to Local Offer: <http://www.askthurrock.org.uk/kb5/thurrock/fis/localoffer.page>

17. External Agencies

Below are the details of external agencies that can provide advice and guidance to anyone on cases of suspected child abuse or adults at risk.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

Tel: 0808 800 5000

NHS 111 Non-urgent Medical Help

Tel: 111

Mental Health Support Organisations

<https://www.southessex.ac.uk/well-being-support>