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1.0	November 2021	First version, Sarah Sweeney, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing
1.1	November 2022	Reviewed by C-SHAW, no updates required
1.2	October 2023	Revised to include safeguarding in relation to research activity; updates to role description for Local Safeguarding Officers.
1.3	October 2024	Revised to include: reference to Freedom of Speech; further updates to role description for Local Safeguarding Officers; clarification that LU's teaching partnerships are subject to local safeguarding arrangements.
1.4	August 2025	Revised to reflect responsibility for review of annual safeguarding reports and the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance moving from Council Safety Health and Wellbeing Committee to Audit and Risk Committee
1.5	September 2025	Revised to move to one Designated Safeguarding Lead for the University, supported by Deputies in relevant areas. Policy update approved by Audit and Risk Committee 10 November 2025.

Referenced policies and documents

Lancaster University Commitment to Safeguarding

Lancaster University Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedures and Guidance

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Lancaster University

Human Resources Recruitment Guidelines (including Disclosure and Barring procedure)

Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy – Staff

Code of Practice: Freedom of Speech

Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

Student Sexual Misconduct Policy

Lancaster University Disabled Student Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Raising Serious Concerns and Disclosing Public Interest Matters (Whistleblowing)

Policy for the Admission of Students Under the Age of 18

Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures

Fitness to Practise Procedures (available on demand)

Student Discipline Regulations

Staff Disciplinary Procedure

Students' Charter

Computer User Agreement

Research Integrity, Ethics & Governance

Commitment to Safeguarding in Research and the Safeguarding in Research Framework

Prevent Guidance

Staff Grievance Procedure

Student Complaints Procedure

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

This policy sets outs Lancaster University's approach to safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk and child protection. The University has developed Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedures and Guidance and Prevent Guidance to provide more detailed operational guidance to staff about responding to safeguarding concerns within the University.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Safeguarding in Research Framework](#) and other relevant policies referenced above, e.g. the Lancaster University 'Student Discipline Regulations', the 'Student Sexual Misconduct Policy', the 'Student Bullying and Harassment Policy', the 'Computer User Agreement', 'Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures', 'Fitness to Practice Procedures', the 'Code of Practice: Freedom of Speech', and staff 'Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy'.

1.   Legal Context for Safeguarding in Higher Education

1.1   Safeguarding is about preventing harm caused by abuse and neglect. The legal duties focus on certain vulnerable groups, namely 'children' and 'adults at risk' (sometimes called "vulnerable adults") who are experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect.

These children and adults at risk may be a student, a staff member or anyone connected with the University community (e.g. a research participant, a child on campus as part of a school group).

The University uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance.

Safeguarding children is defined by the Department for Education in [Working together to safeguard children](#) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding adults at risk is defined in the [Care and support statutory guidance](#) issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect;
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect;
- people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action;
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing.

The Higher Education Sector has not had specific duties placed on it by legislation in respect of safeguarding, however institutions are expected to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are safe and protected in all interactions with an institution. The University may also hold specific responsibilities for safeguarding under the compliance frameworks of various accrediting bodies and research funders (e.g. UKRI).

1.2 Lancaster University's commitment to our applicants, students, staff, partner bodies and the community at large are defined in our [Strategic Plan](#), [People and Culture Plan 2021-2026](#), and [Student Charter](#).

Lancaster University acknowledges our responsibilities towards safeguarding groups and individuals at risk, in particular those relating to the protection of children and adults at risk identified under the following (not exhaustive):

- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Domestic Violence and Crime Act (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Protections of Freedoms Act (2012)
- Mental Health Act (1983) as amended (2007)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Children Act 1989
- Disclosure and Barring Service requirements
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- [Lancaster University Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech](#)

1.3 In some cases, individuals are placed at risk due to the environment or the beliefs, actions or aggressions of other people. Examples of this include instances such as:

- stalking, hate crimes or other forms of harassment;
- domestic violence, sexual abuse;
- financial or material abuse;
- homelessness;
- refugees/asylum seeker status.

In such cases the University will work with the person concerned and relevant authorities such as Social Care or the NHS to support that individual and undertake all reasonable actions to safeguard them. The University will normally seek to work within the parameters of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

1.4   The University is permitted to share personal and sensitive information with relevant parties should it be believed that a child or adult is at risk of harm. Where the University believes that the situation is such that an adult individual is unable to make an informed decision, confidentiality may be breached to protect that individual. Where such instances occur, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or nominee) will take advice from relevant professional teams and consult with the Data Protection Officer and the Strategic Planning and Governance team before releasing any information.

1.5   All actions under this policy will comply with the general safeguarding principles identified by Lancashire County Council.

2.   Purpose

2.1   The purpose of this document is to:

- identify who is responsible for safeguarding adults and children;
- identify the methods by which the University will safeguard groups and individuals at risk;
- set out the University's policy with regard to how it discharges its safeguarding duties and the protection of groups and individuals at risk and how this will be achieved;
- set out the administrative responsibilities in the event of an incident or a concern;
- set out the University's position on information sharing with regard to safeguarding;
- identify where supporting information can be found.

3.   Definitions

3.1   Adult at risk – section 42 of The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk of harm as a person over the age of 18 who:

(i)   has needs for care and support;
(ii)   is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
(iii)   as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

It is recognised that there will have to be a judgement made to determine whether or not to treat someone as an adult at risk at any specific time. It is important that if the definition is not met that information about that person should not be shared without consent except in extreme situations or where not to do so would place someone else at risk.

Individuals may only temporarily meet the definition of 'adult at risk' if this is caused by external factors and in such cases, the University work with external organisations to ensure appropriate support is in place where responsibility for providing such support lies with those organisations.

3.2   Children – anyone under the age of 18 years

3.3   Child protection – child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

3.4   Partner body – any organisation or institution working with the University in partnership (either formal or informal) to provide services to groups or individuals at risk. Examples of such organisations would be schools, external employers providing placements, charitable providers providing services on or off campus or research partners.

3.5   Prevent – statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.[1]

3.6   Student at risk of harm – for the purpose of this policy, one who is at risk of harm or exploitation relating to their physical, mental, psychological wellbeing or potential for being drawn into criminality.

4.   Scope

4.1   This policy applies to Lancaster University UK as follows:

(a)   all students registered on an undergraduate programme, postgraduate taught programme, postgraduate research programme or other programme of study offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation;

(b)   all students registered on programmes through INTO with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation;

(b)   prospective students engaged in LU activities;

(c)   adults at risk registered as students or prospective students (as above);

(d)   children and adults at risk engaged in LU-branded activities, including research projects or innovation projects;

(e)   children resident in University accommodation;

(f)   staff in the course of their duties, including those conducting research with children or adults at risk;

(g)   contractors/agents engaged by the University who may come into contact with children, groups or individuals at risk as part of their work either on or off the Lancaster campus;

(h)   partner bodies working with the University to provide services to staff or students, on or off campus, including employers in apprenticeship programme partnerships;

(i)   visitors to the University or volunteers working on or off University premises where, as part of their University work, this will involve contact with children or adults at risk;

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[1]   Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK

(j)   external organisations/individuals where:
- we engage in branded activities;
- we have a statutory duty;
- we are partners on research or innovation activities;
- we have a knowledge that an employer/placement supervisor/professional body would have a legitimate interest/concern.

4.2   Where the University has made arrangements with a partner body, staff, students and contractors will also be expected to work within the safeguarding arrangements of that institution (e.g. when undertaking volunteering activities within Schools or conducting research with the NHS). Apprentices in the workplace are expected to follow the safeguarding arrangements of their organisation in addition to those of the University.

4.3   Those departments and services of the University that deal frequently with under 18s (for example Lancaster University Pre-School Centre) will have in place their own detailed child safeguarding policies relevant to the activities undertaken. Copies of these policies will be held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.4   Lancaster University's regional and international teaching partnerships are subject to locally agreed safeguarding procedures.

4.5   Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) operates its own safeguarding policy and procedures. The University works in partnership with LUSU where safeguarding concerns involve University students, staff or activities.

5.   Policy

5.1   Lancaster University recognises that we have a statutory responsibility to safeguard the welfare of:

- children within the University community;
- adults at risk within the University community;
- those children and adults at risk who come into contact with University activities, including research activities;
- University students at risk of mental or physical harm;
- University staff at risk of mental or physical harm;
- those with whom students come into contact in the course of their studies or in the wider community.

5.2   The University will take all appropriate steps to safeguard groups and individuals at risk by:

- providing a safe environment for all employees, students, contractors/agents and people, including children, young people and adults at risk who use or interact with its services or facilities, recognising that safeguarding is not just about protecting children, students and adults at risk from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act, but also relates to the broader aspects of care and education;

- ensuring that all allegations of abuse or neglect of children or groups or individuals at risk are appropriately reported to the relevant body as required;
- ensuring that all suspicions or concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism are reported to the Prevent Safeguarding Officer (or in their absence, the relevant Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead);
- taking active measures to identify and prevent anyone who is unsuitable to work with children or groups or individuals at risk from doing so;
- ensuring that every member of staff understands that they are responsible for the safeguarding of students, staff, research participants and others;
- recognising the University's responsibility to make staff, students and relevant partner bodies/agencies aware of their individual responsibilities to help identify and mitigate risk and to take appropriate and timely action to protect groups and individuals at risk;
- providing assurance through due diligence that third party organisations such as placement providers and employers have effective safeguarding arrangements in place where students or staff engage with those organisations as part of their University activity;
- ensuring that on the occasions when University services or facilities are used for external events that adequate and appropriate risk assessments are undertaken to ensure the safety and security of the group including any additional arrangements required for specific individuals;
- ensuring that due regard is given relating to any issues arising relating to the possibility of harm being caused due to freedom of speech being abused and taking action to mitigate or prevent such harm.

5.3 We will do this by:

- ensuring that information about safeguarding, safeguarding in research, Prevent, and how to report concerns, is disseminated appropriately to all staff and students;
- keeping up to date with any relevant statutory changes and communicating any updates to staff and students;
- providing transparent guidance materials and ensuring that those with specific safeguarding roles are appropriately and regularly trained;
- working with external agencies where necessary in order to implement and monitor the activities regulated by this policy and associated procedures and guidance;
- embedding current best practice guidance for the sector outlined by the government for the relevant group in any update or review of this policy and associated procedures and guidance.

5.4 The welfare of the child, adult at risk, member of staff or student is paramount. All individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or gender identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

5.5　We will fulfil our legal obligations working in partnership with the subject of the safeguarding concern and appropriate individuals and agencies; this is essential in promoting safeguarding. This includes supporting children and adults at risk to understand how the University keeps them safe from harm.

5.6　Safeguarding issues often present alongside issues such as mental health needs, sexual violence or bullying. The University will ensure a collective and co-ordinated response in such situations.

6.　Children on campus

6.1　The responsibility for the safety of any child brought onto campus lies with the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will also be responsible for:

- ensuring that University policies are followed at all times (e.g. Data Protection);
- the cost of any damages caused by the child.

6.2　Where issues arise relating to the safety of a child who is residing in University Residences with their parents, the University will contact Lancashire County Council Social Care for guidance.

6.3　The University treats all its students, regardless of age on entry, as independent, mature individuals. However, under 18s living in England are considered by law to be children, which means the University has additional responsibilities towards students it admits who are under the age of 18 prior to the start of their course, until the date at which they turn 18, even if this period is brief. Where this is the case, the University will require the applicant and their parent(s) or guardian(s) to complete the University's Consent Form for Students Under the Age of 18 and return it to the University as confirmation that both parties have read and understood the nature of the obligations which the University owes to its students under the age of 18 and the extent of the services and facilities available to them. Applicants who are under 18 are made aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the University while they are under 18. The University's obligations are outlined fully in the [Policy for the Admission of Students Under the Age of 18](#) which requires that all registered students under the age of 18 have a nominated UK guardian.

7.　Responsibilities under this policy[2]

7.1　Accountable Governing Body – University Council are the trustees of the University and the accountable governing body responsible for safeguarding. Audit and Risk Committee has delegated authority for approval, regular review and monitoring of the implementation of this policy.

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[2]　Role descriptions for Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputies and Local Safeguarding Officers are included as Appendix 1.

7.2   Accountable Senior Manager (University Leadership Team) – the Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Council. Accountability is exercised by means of recommendations from the relevant committees and management structures and authorised by the Vice-Chancellor.

7.3   Responsible Senior Manager – the Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the Professional Services Divisions detailed in this policy.

7.4   Designated Safeguarding Lead – role held by the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services.

7.5   Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Staff (Operations) – role held by the Deputy Director People and Organisational Effectiveness).

7.6   Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Students and Applicants (Operations) – role held by the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.

7.7   Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for Research (Operations) – role held by the Associate Director of Research Services.

7.8   Prevent Safeguarding Officer – role held by Emergency Planning and Risk Manager. This role is responsible for all activities relating to the operation of the Prevent Strategy.

7.9   Faculty Executive Deans/Directors of Service/College Principals – responsibility for nominating Local Safeguarding Officers and for ensuring compliance with this policy across their areas.

7.10   Local Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Local Safeguarding Officer – role given locally to the lead and deputy for departmental/college/programme safeguarding or events/activity organiser (as nominated by the relevant Executive Dean, College Principal or Director of Service). There will be a Local Safeguarding Officer nominated for every area of activity and at least one per Faculty/Professional Services Division.

7.11   All staff – to ensure that they are aware of and compliant with the policy and its procedures and guidance notes, particularly how to use the reporting structure and with regard to making any invited visitors aware of their responsibilities under this policy.

7.12   All students – to ensure that they are aware of and compliant with the policy, procedures and relevant guidance notes.

7.13   All invited visitors or voluntary staff (paid or unpaid) – are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and complaint with the policy, procedures and guidance notes.

8. Monitoring and review

8.1 The Director of Student, Education and Academic Services is the University Designated Safeguarding Lead with overall responsibility for this policy and for its implementation and regular review, working in partnership with People and Organisational Effectiveness and Research and Enterprise Services.

8.2 Management oversight of the safeguarding arrangements will be through regular reporting by Local Safeguarding Officers on any issues in relation to safeguarding culture or effective implementation of this policy to:

- Safeguarding Leads meetings and reporting structures
- Faculty or Divisional Leadership Meetings

8.3 On behalf of the Council, its Audit and Risk Committee will receive and consider an annual assurance report concerning the University's safeguarding culture, and management of safeguarding duties and practices. The University Executive Board (UEB) will consider this report prior to the Committee.

8.4 The policy will be subject to annual review by the UEB, Audit and Risk Committee and Council, unless there is the introduction of a major legislative or other change in responsibilities.

9. Breaches of the policy

9.1 Should a student or member of staff be found to be in breach of this policy and its related procedures, the University will investigate the matter and take action as necessary through relevant student or staff disciplinary procedures, unless it is inappropriate to do so when alternative processes will be agreed. While the allegation is being investigated the individual may be suspended from duty or removed from activities and duties placing them in contact with children or adults at risk, in line with the disciplinary process but without prejudice as a neutral act to remove any potential safeguarding risks.

9.2 If members of staff, students, alumni, student ambassadors or volunteers are concerned that another member of staff, student, alumni, student ambassador or volunteer is not following the guidance and procedures, they should contact their own project coordinator, tutor, or line manager, or the relevant Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for the University. Reporting of concerns is dealt with in the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedures and Guidance and the Safeguarding in Research Framework.

9.3 Breaches of the policy will be reported to Audit and Risk Committee through the regular report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputies and Local Safeguarding Officers: Roles and Responsibilities

A list of current Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputies and Local Safeguarding Officers is available here: Safeguarding concerns

1.   Designated Safeguarding Lead

1.1   The University's Designated Safeguarding Lead has the following responsibilities:

- setting the direction for the University's safeguarding practice for staff/students;
- ensuring the institution is meeting its legal and statutory requirements including the Prevent Duty;
- undertaking higher level safeguarding and Prevent awareness training and leading on this for the institution;
- holding decision making authority on the application of this policy;
- promoting and championing safeguarding to ensure that it is prioritised at a senior level within the institution;
- ensuring safe recruitment and that appropriate checks are made on staff undertaking 'regulated activity';
- making sure safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by staff, students and volunteers;
- ensuring appropriate training on safeguarding, safer recruitment and Prevent is in place as part of induction for all staff, students and volunteers, and that a register of staff who have completed training is maintained and that training is refreshed on a regular basis;
- ensuring that Council members and members of the University senior management team have received safeguarding and Prevent training;
- keeping all staff, students and volunteers informed of good practice and new legislation and guidance;
- ensuring all students and staff have sufficient and appropriate means to report concerns, issues, and incidents;
- providing support, supervision and advice for any staff member, student or volunteer with a safeguarding or child protection concern;
- handling allegations made against staff/students;
- having an understanding of the referral procedures and knowing how to contact and establish links with local authority or police;
- liaising with and making referrals to appropriate agencies about staff where there are safeguarding concerns, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- liaising with the Emergency Planning and Risk Manager to refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and supporting staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;

- ensuring effective monitoring and review by ensuring:
  o safeguarding policy and good practice is reviewed on an annual basis for minor changes;
  o that major changes are discussed with Audit and Risk Committee and reported to relevant stakeholders as required, to take account of new legislation or duties or when existing legislation is updated;
  o ensuring that the policy and procedures will be reviewed in light of the effectiveness and appropriateness of action taken to deal with any incidents;
  o submitting regular safeguarding reports to Audit and Risk Committee.

2. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

2.1 These roles support the Designated Safeguarding Lead with particular responsibility for:

- the implementation and operational review of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy;
- acting as the main contact within the University on safeguarding issues (except Prevent);
- acting as the lead liaison with external agencies (except Prevent);
- working with the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services, the Chief People Officer and the Director of Research and Enterprise Services where appropriate to deal with issues arising;
- making minor changes to policy wording and content to ensure that the policy is always current. Such changes will be reported to the relevant committee(s);
- major changes to the policy, such as significant content changes, changes to responsibilities, policy application or changes resulting from new legislation, must be approved directly by Audit and Risk Committee and reported to relevant stakeholders;
- ensuring that the supporting guidance materials are current.

3. Local Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Local Safeguarding Officer

3.1 *Role purpose*

This role is given locally to the lead for Faculty/Department/College/Divisional safeguarding (as nominated by the relevant Executive Dean, College Principal or Director of Service). Each Faculty/College/Professional Services Division must have at least one nominated Local Safeguarding Officer who can act as a local point of expertise on safeguarding, offering support to Heads of area and line managers with safeguarding awareness raising in their teams, identifying safeguarding issues for activities in their area and ensuring safeguarding guidelines are followed. Some departments or programmes may also require a dedicated Local Safeguarding Officer (for example apprenticeship programmes).

3.2   *Responsibilities*:

- undertaking appropriate higher-level safeguarding and Prevent awareness training;
- providing a source of advice, support and communication and act as the safeguarding contact within their area;
- raising awareness of the University's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy, Procedures and Guidance and Safeguarding in Research Framework with staff in their Faculty/College/Division;
- embedding a strong safeguarding reporting culture;
- representing departments/services on the safeguarding related committees and groups and provide advice and leadership on signposting within their area, making referrals to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- working with Heads of Department/Service to ensure that all staff and students understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and that all relevant activities in their area of activity are correctly safeguarded;
- supporting staff in their Faculty/College/Division to undertake appropriate risk assessments for activities and events to ensure that any child or adult at risk is suitably protected. This includes consideration of reasonable adjustments relating to disability-related or other needs;
- supporting staff in their Faculty/College/Division in liaising with partner bodies and external organisations hosting university staff/students to coordinate activities under the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and define the local arrangements for investigations and points of escalation as required;
- supporting staff in their Faculty/College/Division who are undertaking or making arrangements for any DBS or other formal checks that need to be in place in line with the relevant section of the policy;
- working with staff in their Faculty/College/Division to ensure that staff involved in relevant activities or events have been suitably trained in safeguarding;
- ensuring that Heads of Department/Division are aware that when their staff are working with partner bodies to deliver collaborative activities, staff responsible for the activity make sure that any 'handover points' are agreed and joint risk assessments are undertaken with the partner body in advance of the activity or event;
- holding formal responsibility for reporting incidents or concerns arising under the policy which are brought to their attention;
- supporting staff in their Faculty/College/Division in establishing guidelines for reporting safeguarding incidents relevant to the specific event/activity and ensure that all relevant people are aware of these;
- be particularly alert to the needs of under 18 students and adults who may be potentially at risk, thereby ensuring that colleagues know how to refer for early help;
- liaising with the relevant University Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or Prevent Safeguarding Officer when necessary.

3.3   *Training and support*

Dedicated safeguarding lead training will be provided for Local Safeguarding Officers and Deputies and must be refreshed every two years. Local Safeguarding Officers meet termly as a group to share good practice, updates and developments relevant to safeguarding, and to make suggestions for improvement or further consideration to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Local Safeguarding Officers can also ask for advice from the University's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.