



Safeguarding and Student Welfare Policy

Policy summary

Hilderstone College seeks to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all. The College believes that abuse of any kind is unacceptable and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all its students, particularly under 18s and vulnerable adults, as well as staff members. All stakeholders including staff, governors, homestay hosts and service providers working for or with the College recognise these responsibilities.

This policy will be made known and available to all students, staff members and other stakeholders, and is published on the College website. It is expected that all these people will understand and apply this policy.

Policy monitoring and review

Safeguarding policies and procedures are reported on bi-annually in the College report to governors, taking into consideration any incidents, as well as feedback from all parties. They are subsequently reviewed annually, or more frequently should there be a significant change in key staff, in requirements or through recommendations from the College report.

Designated Safeguarding Team (DST)

The College has an established team of designated staff trained to advanced levels in safeguarding. The team includes a Designated Safeguarding Lead (the College Principal) and a deputy. The names of DST members are displayed on a notice posted in different places around the College.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
Lee Shutler, Principal: Senior manager with overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
Martin Millbank/Louise Cambray deputise as DSL in the Principal's absence
- **Designated Safeguarding Team**
The DST have received training in advanced safeguarding. They have responsibility for day-to-day for safeguarding, support and recording disclosures, allegations and concerns. Currently, members are:

Louise Cambray, Accommodation and Welfare Officer
Angela Silk, Deputy Accommodation and Welfare Officer
Melanie McLaren, Student Services Administrator
Mike Harding, Deputy Director of Studies
Martin Millbank, Head of Finance and Administration
Samantha Grant, Administrative Assistant/Tutor
Lynn Harper, Social Activities Organiser
David Hume-Almeida, Social Activities Assistant
Jonathan Hume-Almeida, Tutor
Peter Lawson, Tutor
- The College acknowledges that everyone who comes into contact with under 18s and vulnerable adults has a role to play in safeguarding. All College staff members are, therefore, regularly trained in Basic Safeguarding Awareness.

Safeguarding is ensured by:

1. Practising safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, homestay hosts and service providers to work with under 18s and vulnerable adults
2. Maintaining a safe and supportive environment for under 18s and vulnerable adults
3. Maintaining procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

1. Safe recruitment in checking suitability of staff, homestay hosts and service providers

General principles

- All people who have unsupervised access to under 18s or vulnerable adults as part of Hilderstone College activities should be subject to checks as to their suitability for this type of access
- These checks include Enhanced DBS checks, checking references and a robust set of procedures for following up any concerns, as set out in this Safeguarding Policy
- These checks will cover all staff, homestay hosts for under 18s and service providers (such as taxi companies, coach/bus companies and tour providers)
- Any staff member returning directly from a lengthy period based abroad, as well as group leaders for groups with participants under the age of 18, will be required to produce a current police good conduct certificate from the country where they have been working or live
- The College has a confidential single central register of all relevant safeguarding checks.

Portability of Enhanced DBS disclosures

- Portability refers to the re-use of an Enhanced DBS disclosure, obtained for a position in one organisation and later used for a position in a new organisation
- Hilderstone College will exercise its discretion to accept such Enhanced DBS disclosures on a case by case and risk-assessed basis, in conjunction with other evidence presented
- In cases of doubt, a new Enhanced DBS check will always be carried out.

Use of DBS Update Service

- Hilderstone College will ensure that where a new Enhanced DBS check is carried out, the applicant is aware of the DBS Update Service and encouraged to participate, acknowledging however that this is purely voluntary
- If applicants sign up for the DBS Update Service, the cost will be at the applicant's expense
- Where an applicant is participating in the DBS Update Service, Hilderstone College will obtain the applicant's permission to check for updates on the DBS online system on the date when a new DBS check would have been required in accordance with this policy.

Validity of Enhanced DBS disclosures (for applicants not signed up to the DBS Update Service)

- There is no period of validity for an Enhanced DBS disclosure
- Hilderstone College will normally require an Enhanced DBS disclosure that is less than 3 years old and require a new Enhanced DBS disclosure every 3 years
- In addition, Hilderstone College requires all relevant staff and homestay hosts to make an annual declaration of their suitability to work with under 18s and vulnerable adults, and service providers to provide written evidence that their staff have undergone satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosures within the last 3 years.

Suitability of staff

Hilderstone College will ensure the suitability of staff by:

- Ensuring that all applicants are interviewed and asked to provide at least one reference. All such references will be followed up, and will include a specific enquiry as to whether there is any impediment to the prospective staff member being employed in a situation where s/he will have responsibility for the care of, or substantial access to, under 18s or vulnerable adults
- Requesting an Enhanced DBS disclosure for all relevant members of staff or checking the DSB Update Service. It will be made clear to applicants that the work may involve working with under 18s or vulnerable adults and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Known abusers will be excluded
- Ensuring that appointments are not confirmed until Hilderstone College is confident, and Enhanced DBS checks are proven, that the applicant can be safely entrusted with under 18s or vulnerable adults
- Requiring applicants whose DBS records are highlighted as containing adverse information to make the document detailing this adverse information available to Hilderstone College for inspection in order that a decision can be made whether to proceed with appointment. Hilderstone College will draw an adverse inference from a refusal or failure to make this information available and in such circumstances will not be able proceed with the appointment
- Ensuring that Enhanced DBS checks for all relevant members of staff are kept up to date, requiring interim annual declarations of suitability to work with under 18s and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that Hilderstone College does not employ persons identified as being on the DBS barred list.

Suitability of homestay hosts

Hilderstone College will ensure the suitability of homestay hosts to host under 18s generally by:

- Carrying out initial and subsequent annual inspections of homestay hosts' facilities and gathering feedback from every student, both during and after their stay
- Carrying out a face-to-face welfare meeting with students under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a group leader, during the first few days of their stay
- Requiring initial and interim annual declarations of suitability to work with under 18s and vulnerable adults from all homestay hosts who are likely to host under 18s
- Ensuring that no under 18 is placed with a homestay host until a declaration of suitability has been received.
- Requiring a valid Enhanced DBS disclosure within the last 3 years from the main householder
- Ensuring that no under 18 is placed with a homestay host until the necessary Enhanced DBS checks / DBS Update Service checks have been completed on the main householder
- Requiring main householder applicants whose DBS records are indicated as containing adverse information to make the document detailing this adverse information available to Hilderstone College for inspection in order that a decision can be made whether to proceed with placing an under 18. Hilderstone College will draw an adverse inference from a refusal or failure to make this information available and in such circumstances will not proceed with placing an under 18.

Suitability of service providers

Hilderstone College will ensure the suitability of service providers by:

- Requiring an annual declaration and written evidence from service providers that their staff have undergone satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosures / DBS Update Service checks within the last 3 years.

3. Maintaining a safe and supportive environment

All members of staff and homestay hosts should ensure they avoid making themselves vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuse by following the guidelines set out in this document and, as relevant, the staff handbook or homestay host guidance.

Responsibilities of staff

In order to maintain a safe and supportive environment, Hilderstone College will:

- Maintain an environment where under 18s and vulnerable adults feel secure, are encouraged to communicate and express themselves, and are listened to
- Ensure that all students and staff know there is a team of designated staff for welfare and safeguarding (DST) they can approach if they have any concerns
- Ensure that all students and staff are aware of the Designated Safeguarding Team (DST) whom they may approach if they have any concerns over their own or others' welfare
- Ensure that DST members receive appropriate training and support for their role
- Ensure that every member of staff is familiar with Hilderstone College's Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Ensure that every member of staff knows the names of the DST members
- Ensure that every member of staff with contact with under 18s and vulnerable adults understands their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DST.

Safe and supportive environment

In order to maintain a safe and supportive environment, Hilderstone College will:

- Ensure that health and safety policies and risk assessments for social activities, both on and off site, as well as risk assessments for the College premises, pay particular attention to the welfare of students who are under 18 or vulnerable adults
- Establish clear rules, obligations, advice and guidelines for under 18s and vulnerable adults on matters such as curfew times for returning to homestay, e-safety, behaviour that may infringe the law (particularly with regard to the consumption and purchase of alcohol), places to avoid and required standards of behaviour
- Request that all parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 complete and return the *Consent to Study and Travel* form which is sent by the College prior to the student's arrival
- Issue all students with a College identity card with a 24-hour emergency telephone number, which they are told to carry at all times. A contact number for parents / guardians / next of kin is held on the College's database, which the Designated Safeguarding Team members have access to
- Ensure that all students, but in particular those who are under 18 or vulnerable adults, are informed of Hilderstone College's rules, policies, procedures and guidance
- Place under 18s in homestay accommodation individually or with other under 18s, unless the College feels that sharing with another student over the age of 18, but of a similar age nonetheless, will enhance the student's stay and safety rather than adding additional risk. This will only be done following a risk assessment
- Match students to homestay hosts that take account of their needs (such as allergies, sex, diet, cultural background, length of stay) and considering factors such as distance from Hilderstone College, proximity to other students and the local area, as appropriate
- Provide clear and accurate information to potential students, agents and parents prior to enrolment about the nature of courses, learning environment, accommodation provision and this safeguarding policy, so that they make an informed choice about their suitability
- Ensure group leaders travelling with students work with the Designated Safeguarding Team to ensure the safety and well-being of their students.

4. Maintaining procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse or inappropriate behaviour

It is not unusual to have concerns about students for all sorts of reasons. Staff should as a matter of course discuss their concerns with a line manager to clarify their understanding of the situation. Homestay hosts should be encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with the Accommodation and Welfare Officer.

In order to maintain procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, Hilderstone College will:

- Ensure all staff are given training opportunities to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect) and how they should respond to suspicions of abuse
- Provide all students with expected codes of behaviour and ensure that they understand what those are, especially bullying
- Share information and act on any concerns promptly and professionally.

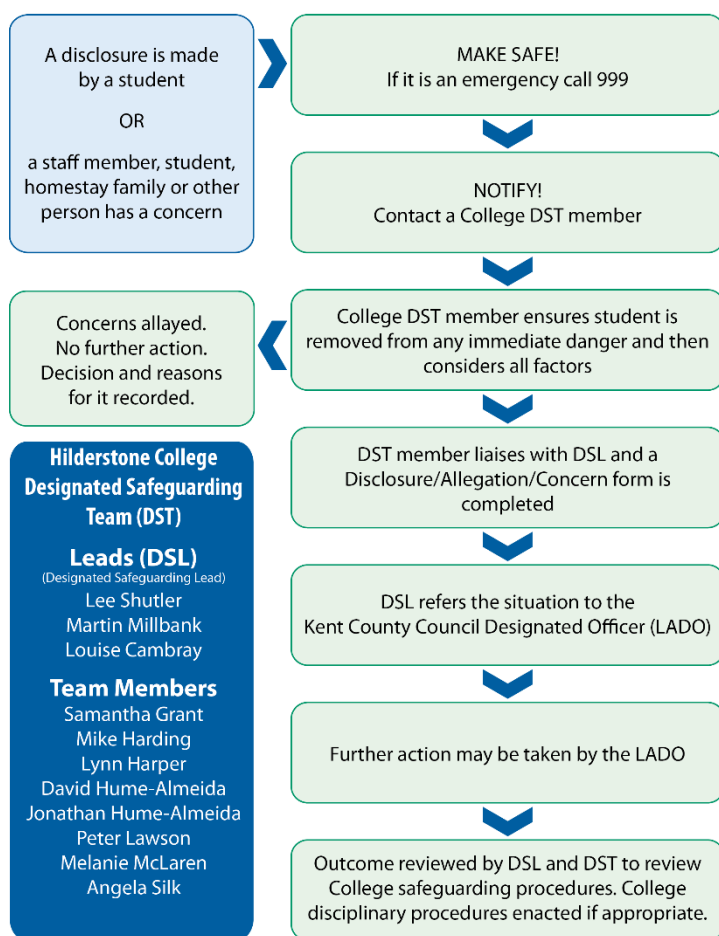
Identifying abuse

Hilderstone College recognises that because of day-to-day contact with under 18s and vulnerable adults, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. All staff members undergo regular Safeguarding Awareness training to be aware of the types and signs of abuse.

Procedure to follow if a disclosure, concern or allegation is made



Procedure for Reporting of Safeguarding Concerns



If a student makes a disclosure, staff members should:

- Listen carefully
- Not ask leading questions
- Be calm, supportive and reassuring
- Not promise confidentiality
- Keep notes of the conversation (You will need to complete a Disclosure/Allegation/Concern form with a DST member as soon as possible).

Record keeping

- It is essential that clear and accurate records are kept regarding all Safeguarding issues
- Anybody with a safeguarding concern or in receipt of a disclosure should contact a DST member at the earliest opportunity
- Any safeguarding disclosure, allegation or concern from a student, member of staff or third party must be recorded on a Disclosure/Allegation/Concern form and shared with the DSL if appropriate.
- Any reports should be factual and should not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented as they may form part of a criminal investigation
- All records of this nature will be stored securely and confidentially.

Confidentiality

Hilderstone College seeks to uphold the confidentiality of students, parents/guardians/next of kin, staff and homestay hosts at all times. This is achieved by:

- Storing confidential information in a locked filing system within the College
- Information about students, parents/guardians/next of kin, staff and homestay hosts being shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Usage and storage of Enhanced DBS disclosure information

- Hilderstone College complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Enhanced DBS disclosures and disclosure information
- Enhanced DBS disclosure information is passed only to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties
- Information disclosed as part of an Enhanced DBS check will be treated as confidential. It is an offence for information in a disclosure to be passed to anyone who does not need it in the course of their duties
- Hilderstone College maintains a record of those to whom disclosures or disclosure information has been revealed.
- The photocopying of any Enhanced DBS disclosure is strictly forbidden by the DBS
- Hilderstone College does not keep disclosure information for longer than is necessary, generally up to 6 months
- Hilderstone College will keep a record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type requested, the reason for which it has been requested, the unique reference number and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Related policies

Hilderstone College will have regard to this Safeguarding Policy when developing other policies, in particular:

- Data Protection policy and procedure
- Staff Handbook
- Student Handbook ([available on College website](#))
- Courses for Teenagers Handbook for Students ([available on College Teenage Courses website](#))
- Complaints procedure ([available on College website](#))
- Homestay Pack
- Equal Opportunities, Student Attendance and Behaviour and Exclusion ([available on College website](#))
- Bullying & Harassment policy ([available on College website](#))
- College internet usage and e-safety policy ([available on College website](#))

Revised: January 2019