

Merton College Code of Practice on Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Objective

To provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults within College premises and in activities undertaken with the approval of the College. For these purposes, a child is a person under 18, and a vulnerable adult is a person who is receiving any form of health care whose ability to protect him or herself from neglect abuse or violence is significantly impaired on account of disability, illness or otherwise.

Premises

The College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that its premises are safe for children and vulnerable adults whose presence can be reasonably anticipated.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The College will discharge its obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Members of staff are reminded that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, activities of a sexual nature between a child and someone who is in a “position of trust” constitute an offence, even though the child is capable of giving consent (that is, is 16 or over). A person is in a position of trust if they are “regularly involved in caring for, training or supervising” another person in an education institution (SOA 2003, s. 22(3)(a)). This could be taken to apply to a tutor or other personal advisor.

Duty of Care

The College will discharge its duty of care to ensure that it will not permit any activity which puts any child or vulnerable adult at risk of abuse, understanding that abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect. In the furtherance of this duty it will take proper care that

- (a) persons who undertake any welfare role with regard to students or members of staff on behalf of the college have been demonstrated to have appropriate qualities to perform such a role;
- (b) members of staff who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults do not do so in circumstances in which there is risk of abuse.
- (c) any allegations or evidence of harm to a child or vulnerable adult will be taken seriously and investigated

Confidentiality

The College will respect the privacy and confidentiality of any child or vulnerable adult in as far as this is consistent with its obligation to discharge its duty of care and statutory obligations.

The Code of Practice of the University

The College takes note of the University’s Code of Practice on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and will observe it in as far as it applies to the College.