



WEA SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Summary:

The WEA is committed to:

- promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults, including staff engaged in the range of its activities.
- preventing abuse wherever possible and ensuring that robust procedures are in place for dealing with safeguarding concerns, allegations of abuse or disclosures.
- protecting children, young people and adults from exploitation and grooming by extremists, as defined by the Prevent duty.
- establishing and maintaining an environment where children, young people and adults feel safe and secure, are able to talk and are listened to.
- ensuring that clear direction is given to staff, governors, members volunteers and others about expected behaviour and action when identifying and responding to safeguarding issues.
- making explicit the responsibilities of everyone in relation to safeguarding children, young people and adults, including those defined as “vulnerable” or “at risk”, in response to current legislation and guidance.
- promoting safeguarding through recruitment processes and ensuring required checks are completed prior to the appointment of any individual, in line with current legislation and good practice.

1. Purpose

The WEA is committed to providing a welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued, and can feel safe and secure. This includes students, staff, members, volunteers and individual visitors who access its facilities and services.

The WEA applies the concept of safeguarding to students and staff in a range of situations **regardless of whether they are receiving services that are classed as “regulated” activities or whether they are defined as “vulnerable” or “at risk of abuse or neglect”**.

This policy applies to all senior leaders, salaried and hourly paid staff, members, volunteers, students*, trustees, partnership organisations and agency or contractor staff (e.g. consultants, researchers or advisors).

2. Definitions:

2.1 Scope of learning provision:

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*The WEA is an adult (aged 19+) learning provider with a wide scope of provision which includes adults who may be considered “vulnerable”. However, the WEA may also be engaged in activities or project work within community centres, children’s centres or schools which directly or indirectly involve children or young adults. Therefore this policy encompasses all age groups that are directly or indirectly involved in the WEA’s learning activities.

2.2 Child:

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

2.3 Adult:

An adult is anyone aged 18 or over.

2.4 Vulnerable adult:

An adult (a person aged 18 or over) may be considered as vulnerable when they are receiving one of the following services defined as a “regulated” activity:

Health care; relevant personal care; social care work; assistance in relation to general household matters by reason of age, illness or disability; conveying (due to age, illness or disability in prescribed circumstances)

(Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Act 2006/ with some amendments in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012).

However, the WEA recognises that “vulnerability” is not a rigid concept confined to certain settings. The description can also include a person who:

- is frail due to age, ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability and/or sensory impairment
- has mental health needs
- has a long term illness
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer who provides personal assistance to a family member/friend and is subject to abuse
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support
- may be subject to other circumstances, not prescribed here, where a reasonable person would consider them vulnerable.

2.5 Abuse (vulnerable adults):

Abuse is defined as “a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons”. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subjected to it”. (Department of Health: “No secrets, Section 2; amended by the Care Act 2014).

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2.6 Child Abuse:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015/updated September 2016) defines abuse as “a form of maltreatment of a learner. Somebody may abuse or neglect a learner by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another learner or learners.”

16 areas of abuse are identified including cyber-bullying, domestic violence, drugs, fabricated or induced illness, faith abuse, forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, private fostering, female genital mutilation (FGM), gender based violence against women and girls, radicalisation, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking, mental health.

Whilst the legislation and procedures are different when responding to child protection concerns and Adult Safeguarding, most of the principles and procedures for staff are the same. Adult and child safeguarding is the responsibility of all.

3. Scope and Responsibilities

3.1 Responsibility of all staff

All salaried and hourly paid staff, senior leaders, students, members, volunteers and trustees are responsible for creating an environment that promotes well-being and ensures personal safety. They will act promptly in accordance with the safeguarding policy and inform the Regional Designated Safeguarding Person or the WEA Safeguarding lead, of any issues of suspected or reported abuse of children, young people or adults.

3.2 Trustees and Senior Leaders

Trustees and Senior Leaders will receive appropriate training on safeguarding and will know their responsibilities and legislative requirements with respect to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

They will ensure that:

- A culture of vigilance is promoted
- Students feel safe.
- WEA’s Safeguarding policy, procedures and reporting systems are implemented effectively and that disclosures and/or allegations of abuse are handled appropriately.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.
- There is a designated member of staff in charge of safeguarding and, within each region, a designated safeguarding person. Safeguarding designates are trained to an appropriate level with updated training every two years.
- There is a designated Association Trustee who has a responsibility for safeguarding in champions its importance, and ensures appropriate scrutiny.
- There is a clear approach to implementing the Prevent duty, protecting children, young people and adults from exploitation and grooming by extremists.

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- Safe recruitment processes are followed; required checks are completed prior to the appointment of any individual, in line with current legislation and good practice. A single central record is maintained.
- There are procedures in place to handle allegations against staff and volunteers.
- Safe use of electronic and social media is promoted.
- Appropriate information sharing policies are in place.
- Appropriate whistleblowing policies are in place.

3.3 WEA Safeguarding Lead Officer

The Safeguarding Lead Officer has responsibility for:

- the safeguarding policy and framework; annual review and update.
- facilitating regular meetings of the Regional Designated Safeguarding persons
- centrally recording statistics on safeguarding incidents.
- providing advice to Regional Safeguarding Designates on safeguarding issues, disclosures or referrals.
- providing support and advice to Association Governors, Managers and HR staff in dealing with matters that have a safeguarding dimension.
- promoting a culture where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about safeguarding practice and addressing concerns in a timely manner.
- consulting with the HR team in cases where a safeguarding disclosure involves a member of staff or volunteer.
- implementation of the Prevent duty
- ensuring that Safeguarding training is delivered in the regions and that training resources are current and appropriate.
- providing reports for the Board of Trustees.
- contributing to the annual Self-Assessment process.

3.4 Line Managers

Line managers have a responsibility to ensure that all staff members and volunteers receive training relevant to their role. Suitable training will be facilitated by the WEA Safeguarding Lead Officer or locally as part of an induction programme in which staff are given clear guidance on WEA values, the safeguarding approach and procedures, and safe working practices. Training may include personal briefings, face to face training, online modules, webinars, video training conferences and self-training packs. Where appropriate, staff appraisal reviews and line manager supervision meetings should include discussion of safeguarding issues. Line managers will follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding procedure document (SAFE 3) when dealing with an incident of concern or disclosure of abuse.

3.5 Regional Designated Safeguarding persons

Each region has a named Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who is responsible for:

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- maintaining a culture of vigilance
- ensuring that all Safeguarding procedures are followed in the Region.
- being the first point of contact in that area should any safeguarding issues arise.
- following the procedures set out in the Safeguarding procedure document (SAFE 3) when dealing with an incident of concern or disclosure of abuse.
- maintaining confidential and secure written records.
- making referrals to Local Adult Safeguarding Boards, Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards, or local Prevent officer, as appropriate.
- working with other agencies , as required, within the framework of Local Authority Safeguarding Board Policy and Procedures
- providing an annual report for the Regional Committee
- reporting, as required, to the Safeguarding Designate Lead.
- maintaining the currency of their training, as advised by the Safeguarding Designate Lead.
- organising staff safeguarding training in their region.

The Designated Safeguarding Persons will form a network team, facilitated by the Safeguarding Lead, to share and update training and practice. Networking events will normally take place remotely, with one annual face to face meeting.

3.6 Area Education Managers/Education co-ordinators

All education managers/coordinators will implement the Safeguarding policies and procedures and maintain a culture of vigilance. They will ensure that all tutors have received a safeguarding induction, are aware of the procedures and who to refer concerns/disclosures to. Education managers/co-ordinators who are also recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that DBS checks for tutors and volunteers have been completed where necessary before a course starts.

3.7 Tutors and volunteers

All tutors will receive an induction which will place a strong emphasis on the tutor role in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent Duty procedures. Standard tutor induction resources are provided to ensure consistency in the WEA approach and are available on the intranet:

<https://intranet.wea.org.uk/tutors/induction-learning-and-development>

All tutors have access to the WEA Tutor Handbook which also provides guidance on Prevent and Safeguarding procedures. At the beginning of a course, tutors will ensure that all students are aware of appropriate policies and how to report incidents and concerns. To support this responsibility, tutors are provided with a standard welcome session PowerPoint for students and an example of a Prevent/Safeguarding student induction discussion activity.

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All volunteers will receive a Safeguarding/Prevent Duty induction which is suitable for their role and will be aware of how to report incidents and concerns.

3.8 Recruitment Managers

Those involved in recruiting to the WEA will be required to recruit and select staff or volunteers carefully and safely, assessing the risk, referring to the WEA DBS procedures without exception and seeking advice where necessary

In relation to the recruitment of staff, the WEA undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any individual on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. The suitability of a person with a criminal record will vary, depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions. When dealing with individual disclosures, the WEA DBS procedures must be followed at all times. The WEA will not normally employ individuals with prior convictions for sexual or violent offences.

Procedures and guidelines for carrying out DBS checks are made available separately. All related procedures will, as a minimum standard, be in line with the WEA code of conduct for staff, students and volunteers and any guidelines and policies of the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Data Protection Act 1998.

4. Training

The WEA requires all appropriate staff and volunteers to undergo training with the aim of ensuring that they understand their Safeguarding responsibilities and act upon them accordingly. Training will be proportionate to the role using a range of formats which include e-learning, video conferences, face to face group sessions, and staff conferences. External training will be utilised as appropriate. WEA training resources will be provided and will be updated regularly to take into account topical issues, incidents or changes in legislation. All regions are required to comply with the WEA protocol for the completion and recording of Safeguarding training.

- The Safeguarding Lead Designate is a trained Safeguarding and Prevent duty facilitator, and will update facilitator training at least every two years, and safeguarding refresher training every year.
- All Regional Designated Safeguarding Officers will complete updated training, including the Prevent duty, annually and are responsible for ensuring that Safeguarding training needs are met in their region, in compliance with WEA policy.
- All Education Managers/co-ordinators will complete appropriate safeguarding training, including annual refresher training, and will ensure currency of knowledge of organisational policies and procedures related to safeguarding and the Prevent duty

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- Tutors and volunteers will complete online or face to face safeguarding training, with refresher training every year. There will be a strong focus on Safeguarding, including the Prevent duty, in their induction.
- All staff will have an introduction to safeguarding in their induction and be informed who their local Designated Safeguarding Officer is, including how to contact them.
- All staff will complete Prevent duty training, proportionate to their role

5. Professional confidentiality and information sharing in relation to safeguarding concerns.

Guidance states that staff “**Do not promise confidentiality**” or agree “**to keep it secret**” as concerns may require further investigation by the appropriate authorities. A member of staff who receives a disclosure or has a concern should explain clearly to the person about what to expect next and how information could be shared with others who need to know. It is important to seek their agreement, except when to do so would put the child, adult or others at increased risk of significant harm. A degree of professional judgement is involved. There must be a legitimate purpose for sharing information with the overriding consideration being the individual’s safety and welfare.

There is a statutory or professional duty to share relevant information in circumstances where children need to be safeguarded (Keeping Children Safe in Education updated September 2016). The Regional Safeguarding Designate, in consultation with the Safeguarding Lead Officer, will decide whether to refer a case to the relevant Local Authority Adult or Children’s Safeguarding Board, following the policies and procedures of the relevant board. “Data protection fears should not be a barrier to information sharing as the safety of a child should be of utmost importance” (Keeping Children Safe in Education, updated September 2016). The WEA applies the same policy in situations where an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect.

A member of staff should:

- Seek advice if in doubt.
- Ensure that any information shared is accurate and up to date.
- Record reasons for the decision, whether it is to share information or not.

6. Whistleblowing

All staff will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or action of colleagues. The Whistleblowing policy provides guidance to all those who work within the organisation who think they need to “blow the whistle” on alleged bad practice. This may involve the disclosure of information by an employee or worker which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the workplace

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6. Evaluation

Safeguarding practice will be evaluated annually by the Safeguarding Lead Officer. This evaluation will inform judgements made in the Self-Assessment report against the Common Inspection Framework Safeguarding criteria. Quality Improvement actions will be identified and implemented, as appropriate.

7. Review

The Safeguarding Lead Officer is responsible for maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy.

8. Accessibility

If any aspect of this policy or its related procedures causes an employee difficulty on account of any disability that they may have, or if they need assistance because English is not their first language, they should raise this issue with their designated safeguarding person who will facilitate the appropriate arrangements.

9. Links to other policies and procedures

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies/procedures:

- Prevent policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Student Confidentiality policy
- Information sharing Guidance
- Complaint Handling Procedure
- WEA student code of conduct
- Unacceptable student behaviour procedure
- Whistleblowing
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment and Selection/DBS Procedures.
- Volunteer Complaints policy

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