



**AYR COLLEGE
THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

Policy Statement

Ayr College recognises a specific obligation to protect juveniles and vulnerable adults from instances of physical, emotional, sexual or institutional abuse whilst in College.

Ayr College is concerned to safeguard the wholeness and wellbeing of every person in our community, of what ever age. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of every member of our community and particularly the abuse of those most vulnerable among us including children, ie those under the age of eighteen years, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy adheres to the principles outlined in the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 part V of the Police Act (1997) and The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

A vulnerable adult refers to any post - 16 year old students who may be particularly open to abuse by virtue of the possession of a mental health issue, a learning issue or other disability.

Ayr College provides all staff with training in the Guidelines and Procedures on the protection of juveniles and vulnerable adults attending College. All College staff and members of the Board of Management undergo Enhanced Disclosure Scotland checks.

The College operates in line with Local Authority Multi-Disciplinary Adult Protection committees.

Reporting Contacts

The Director of Student Services operates as the Child and Adult Protection Coordinator for Ayr College and is the first point of contact for all College staff. In the case of absence, contact should be made with a member of the cross college children and adult protection team (Appendix 1).

Staff Guidelines and Procedures

Students attending Ayr College have the right to expect protection from abuse by any individual/s connected with the College and its operations.

The requirement for all staff to respond pro-actively and protectively to alleged or actual abuse in line with the College's Policy is not optional. If in any doubt, staff should report any concerns to the Child and Adult Protection Team. In specific cases wilful non-response by staff can be construed as aiding and abetting abuse. In extreme cases this could lead to disciplinary action or prosecution in the courts. Staff

must at all times report suspicions or details of incidents to the Child and Adult Protection Officer.

Responsibilities to students

- The College's Child and Adult Protection Procedures and Guidelines will be effectively communicated to students as appropriate through induction procedures, student information and support sessions.
- The College will endeavour to ensure that all students know the name and location of the designated member of staff who they can approach, if worried or in difficulty.
- The College will provide students with information on lines of communication to appropriate outside agencies.

Responsibilities to Staff

- The College will undertake to raise the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and young people and of their responsibility in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse or neglect in line with the College's Policy.
- The College will provide training for all staff on procedures and identification of possible signs of abuse.
- The College will have clear guidelines for all staff to allow them to effectively deal with cases of abuse or neglect.
- The College will emphasise the need for and facilitate effective communication between members of staff and other agencies.

Support for Staff

Members of staff may feel that they need some support after involvement in a protection incident. Talking over events with a colleague from the Child and Adult Protection Team may be enough to put their involvement in perspective.. Counselling can be arranged if appropriate.

Personal Safety

- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required at times when you are discussing sensitive issues.
- Always arrange activities with protection in mind.

- Do not make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or vulnerable adults.
- Do not show favouritism to any individual.
- Do not jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Do not believe “it could never happen to me”.
- Do not take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggests another approach.

Implementation and Staff Responsibilities

The Director of Student Services will be the designated person responsible for coordinating all protection activities. In the absence of the Director of Student Services a member of the child and adult protection team should be consulted

These responsibilities will include:-

- Liaising internally with staff to gather all appropriate information.
- Reporting the incident/suspensions to the appropriate agency.
- Liaising with external agencies and professionals (police, social services, schools etc).
- Liaising with the Director of Human Resources regarding issues relating to staff or service providers.
- Ensuring there is adequate support for the student involved.

The Director of Student Services is responsible for keeping the Principal informed by regular reports of activities in connection with child and adult protection.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring all new members of staff receive a copy of this policy.

The Estates Manager is responsible for providing a copy of this policy to new contractors.

The Director of Student Services will inform the Principal if anyone who works at the College is, or is suspected of abusing a child under 18. If such a situation arises, the Principal will inform the Scottish Government.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring there is adequate support for any staff dealing with child abuse allegations.

All staff are responsible for informing the Director of Student Services about any visible signs of abuse or suspicions they may have regarding abuse.

The Categories of Abuse

A list of abusive behaviours falling into and across each category of abuse cannot be exhaustive. However, a range would include:-

A) Physical Abuse

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult, including the administration of toxic substance, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

B) Sexual Abuse

Verbal and /or physical intervention of a sexual nature which is unsolicited and unwanted/exposure to sexual or pornographic material/sexual activity with a person who is unable to give informed consent/sexual activity involving under-16 year olds/suggestive or lascivious comments.

C) Physical Neglect

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child or vulnerable adult.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a student talks to a staff member about behaviour he or she is experiencing which may constitute abuse, the staff member must:

- A) Take the disclosure seriously, avoiding any feeling of disbelief.
- B) Explain that the allegation must and will be made known to the Child and Adult Protection Coordinator (Director of Student Services).
- C) Report the content of the disclosure to the Coordinator or a member of the cross college Child and Adult Protection team in the absence of the Coordinator.

Possible Signs of Non-disclosed Abuse

- withdrawn behaviour
- agitated or anxious behaviour
- student being isolated by others
- student isolating him/herself from other students
- inappropriate/improper dress
- unkempt/unwashed/smelly
- overly anxious to please
- bruising and minor injuries
- frequent absences for admission to hospital
- atypical incident of absence from College
- sudden changes in behaviour e.g. secretiveness
- atypical aggressive, acting-out behaviour

Note: There are frequently powerful disincentives to report abuse. These are emotional/psychological factors or threats made by perpetrators.

The experience of abuse may be 'acted-out' in some of the above ways. The key aspect is behaviour which is atypical of the person, or which presents a significant change in their usual presentation and functioning as an individual.

Adult students who disclose childhood abuse

If an adult student discloses childhood abuse to any staff member, that staff member should ascertain through discussion whether or not any children are currently at risk from this same perpetrator. If so then the member of staff does have a responsibility to pass information on to the Director of Student Services acting as the Child and Adult Protection Coordinator.

The decision whether or not to make a disclosure to the Police rests with the adult student.

