



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

Safeguarding Policy

This policy is designed for staff and students working with children, young people and adults who are 'at risk'.

The policy relies on two key expectations;

- members of the College community believe that the welfare of the child, young person or adult 'at risk' is paramount
- everyone has a responsibility to act whenever they are concerned about the wellbeing of a child, young person or adult 'at risk'.

The policy and accompanying procedures enable those working directly with children, young people or adults 'at risk', and their tutors, supervisors or managers, to feel informed and supported. They also establish a structure for responsibility and reporting so that staff and students can act when they have concerns.

In this policy you will find:

1. An introduction to Safeguarding
2. Who this policy is for
3. Safeguarding definitions
4. Staff and student Safeguarding responsibilities
5. Guidance about allegations against RCA staff or students
6. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks
7. Information about the RCA's Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Champions

This policy is supported by the following procedures and guidance:

- Procedure: Project planning checklist when working with children, young people or adults 'at risk'
- Procedure: What to do if you are concerned about a child, young person or adult 'at risk'
- Procedure: Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities following a disclosure or concern
- Guidance: Safeguarding good practice
- Guidance: Definitions and signs of abuse

1. Introduction

Children have the right to be protected from harm. Any organisation or group that works with children or young people must have a clear set of guidelines about how they will keep children safe and respond to child protection concerns.^[1]

The Department for Education's 2018 guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' states:

- *everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe*
- *everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in sharing information and identifying concerns.^[2]*

The Care Act 2014...applies to the safeguarding of adults with care and support needs, where the aim should be to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring (or recurring) wherever possible.^[3]

The College believes that the welfare of children, young people and adults 'at risk' is paramount, and that everyone in our community has a responsibility to act whenever there is concern about the wellbeing of a child, young person or adult 'at risk'.

RCA staff and students may, through self-initiated projects, curriculum projects, research or community engagement, come into contact with children, young people or 'at risk' adults. These projects can and should be inspiring learning experiences for everyone involved. They are also important for students' professional development and their engagement with the ethics, responsibilities and practicalities of working with others. This policy and set of procedures and guidance sets out our commitment to keeping everyone involved in those projects safe, informed and supported.

This policy and set of procedures and guidance are designed to help students and staff to plan projects or research and to help them respond to incidents and emergencies.

All staff and students that intend to, or may be put in the position of, working with children, young people or adults 'at risk' should ensure that they understand this policy and have followed the relevant procedures before the work begins.

This policy and set of procedures is intended to be:

- Visible
- Realistic and fair
- Integrated with existing regulations and policies

It will be reviewed annually, or when an incident triggers a review, by SMT. Where appropriate it will be updated and revised to meet changing needs or responsibilities. For the 2024/25 academic year, the Research Ethics committee will be responsible for drafting and updating the policy. If you have comments or questions about the wording of this policy please contact Zioge Smith, College Secretary.

If you are concerned about the safety, health, or wellbeing of RCA students, including concerns that a student may be an adult 'at risk', please report these through the dedicated online platform Report+Support. The reporting tool provides staff with one location to pass on urgent or emerging welfare concerns to senior members of the Student Experience Team for swift, appropriate action to be taken. The sender of the report will receive an acknowledgement of receipt within two working days.

The College's [Support to Study Policy](#) provides Cause for Concern Policy and guidance in circumstances where there are concerns about a student's capability to participate in their studies, progress academically, or function well in the College environment.

Staff are also encouraged to review the [emergency protocol](#) for student wellbeing and crisis intervention, and discuss any concerns with the Student Experience team by contacting student-support@rca.ac.uk

For general procedures for [Children on College Premises](#) please see the College Health + Safety Intranet pages.

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2. This policy is for:

- Children, young people, adults 'at risk' and their families, carers and support workers
- RCA staff (including Associate Lecturers, Guest Lecturers and Casual Workers) and agency staff who have a public-facing role (e.g. security staff, invigilators)
- RCA students or staff (including Associate Lecturers, Guest Lecturers and Casual Workers) planning a project involving children, young people or adults 'at risk'
- Staff researchers
- RCA students or staff planning an event with a community group
- RCA students acting as ambassadors on behalf of the College

- RCA staff (including Associate Lecturers, Guest Lecturers and Casual Workers) planning a project for RCA students that involves working with the public or a third party organisation.
- Heads of Programme / Supervisors / Tutors / Line Managers responsible for authorising staff and student proposals of events or projects involving children, young people, 'at risk' adults or community groups
- The College's Ethics Committees and Sub-Committees
- Academic, professional service and administrative staff supporting RCA staff or students to deliver a project involving children, young people or adults 'at risk'
- Staff advising on and assessing ethical risks and compliance
- The RCA's Safeguarding Lead, Heather Akif, Chief Operating Officer, the RCA's Deputy Safeguarding Leads and Safeguarding Champions.
- Any member of the RCA community who is concerned about a child, young person or adult 'at risk'.

3. Safeguarding definitions

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Even if a child has reached 16 years of age and is: living independently; in further education; a member of the armed forces; in hospital; or in custody; they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child.^[4]

The Care Act 2014 defines 'an adult at risk' as someone aged 18 years or over who has care and support needs, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and who is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs. People with care and support needs are not inherently vulnerable but may be at greater risk of abuse or neglect.

An adult may be 'at risk' due to age-related frailty, disability, mental ill health, substance misuse or because they are providing care for someone else and therefore may be at risk of harm and exploitation. People who are victims of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and modern slavery would also be considered adults 'at risk'.

Duty of Care is the duty which rests upon an individual or organisation that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child, young person or 'at risk' adult involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual or organisation is responsible. Any person working with children and young people in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care.

4. Responsibilities

The RCA's responsibilities

The RCA has a responsibility to the children, young people and adults 'at risk' who take part in events or projects organised by its staff and students: their welfare is paramount and they have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

The RCA also has a responsibility to support its staff and students in planning such events or projects by providing information, guidance and a framework for reporting concerns. The RCA will provide access to safeguarding training and expert advice to staff with particular safeguarding responsibilities.

While it is impossible to ensure that a child, young person or adult 'at risk' would never come to any harm, with the adoption of this policy and procedures the RCA aims to support the management of the risk associated with our duty of care.

The RCA will meet its responsibilities by:

- creating, promoting and reviewing this policy and procedures in line with best practice
- providing information to those planning projects about the signs of abuse and what to do if they are concerned.
- providing guidance on good practice when working with others.
- maintaining a support structure for project planning within ethics procedures.
- establishing a framework for reporting concerns including appointing a Safeguarding Lead.
- providing appropriate support and training on this policy
- providing a Lost Child procedure and ensuring that all public-facing staff are familiar with this procedure.
- empowering staff and students to act if they are concerned.

If you are a student or member of staff planning a project or research that involves children, young people or 'at risk' adults:

If you are working with children, young people or adults 'at risk' you have a duty of care and a responsibility to act whenever you are concerned about their wellbeing. This means that if you are concerned you must tell someone - either the RCA's Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Lead in your partner organisation.

When working with children, young people or 'at risk' adults you should not, however, assume sole responsibility for their supervision. This responsibility should remain with parents, teachers, carers, guardians, or support workers who should be present throughout.

Staff and students should therefore not normally work with children, young people or 'at risk' adults without a responsible carer, parent, teacher, guardian or support-worker present.

Your responsibilities are to:

- familiarise yourself with and uphold this policy and accompanying procedures. If you are leading a team, you should make sure all your team members are familiar with this policy and accompanying procedures.
- follow the Project Planning Checklist.
- follow the Ethics procedure appropriate to your programme of study or role. If you are an RCA student on a taught pathway (MA, Grad.Dip, MArch, MDes, MFA, MEd and MRes) follow the guidance of the RCA Taught Ethics Committee. If you are a research student (PhD/MPhil) or a member of staff undertaking a research project, please follow the RCA's Research Ethics guidelines.
- familiarise yourself with and follow partner organisation's safeguarding procedures
- follow good practice when working with others (see Guidance on good practice and behaviour when working with children and young people and 'at risk' adults)
- keep your tutor(s), line manager or other appropriate members of staff informed about your project
- complete a risk assessment for your project.
- be aware of some of the signs of abuse and what to do if you are concerned.

If, as an exception, it is necessary or desirable that staff or research students work with children, young people or 'at risk' adults without a parent, guardian, carer or support worker present they must set out in their ethical approval request:

- why it is necessary,
- what additional steps are being taken to ensure safeguarding principles are observed and relevant risks are minimised and managed appropriately,
- provide a copy of the consent form that will be signed by the relevant responsible person.

If their request is approved they must follow this policy and the safeguarding policy and procedures of any partner organisations.

If you are a student or member of staff planning a project or research involving community groups:

If your project involves children, young people or 'at risk' adults, please follow the guidance laid out above. If you are working with a community group or third party that does not fall

into these categories, you should still follow best practice when working with others and complete the relevant ethics form and risk assessment. You should be clear about the nature of the project and/or partnership and how responsibilities are to be divided up. You should know and follow the Safeguarding procedures of the community group or third party.

If you are a member of staff responsible for authorising or supervising projects or research:

Your responsibilities are to:

- familiarise yourself with and uphold this policy and accompanying procedures
- check that your student has followed the project planning checklist and relevant ethics process when planning their project.
- Receive and respond to updates from your student about their project
- Know the procedure to follow if your student is concerned about someone they are working with.

If you are responsible for running an Executive Education event or an Open Day

- Prepare an information sheet for RCA staff leading and supporting the event. This should outline the extent of duty of care for the event, what to do in an emergency and how to report a cause for concern (link to Cause for Concern) if you are worried about someone participating in the event.
- If you are working with an organised group make sure you have discussed and agreed safeguarding and well-being responsibilities with the group leader in advance. Ensure you have discussed how to communicate in an emergency or what to do if you are worried about the well-being of someone in the group.

RCA staff and agency staff with a public-facing role (e.g. security staff, agency staff and invigilators) and those managing staff with a public-facing role

If you come into contact with children, young people or adults 'at risk' as part of your role you have a duty of care and a responsibility to act whenever you are concerned about their wellbeing. This means that if you are concerned you must tell the RCA's Safeguarding Lead.

Your responsibilities are to:

- familiarise yourself with and follow the RCA's Lost Child procedure.
- ensure any public-facing staff you manage are familiar with and follow the Lost Child procedure

- be aware of some of the signs of abuse and what to do if you are concerned.

5. Allegations against RCA staff or students

There might be occasions when a child, young person or adult 'at risk' makes an allegation about a member of staff or a student. The College will treat such allegations seriously and the Safeguarding Lead will be informed. Where a member or members of staff are involved, the College disciplinary policies will be followed. Where students are involved, the Student Misconduct Policy will be followed.

6. Disclosure and Barring Service checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is a record of a person's criminal convictions and cautions. An enhanced DBS check can be requested by an organisation or employer in order to ascertain a candidate's suitability for a role that involves working closely and/or regularly with children or adults 'at risk'.

RCA staff and students may work with children and young people in situations where they are supervised by teachers, parents, guardians or carers who will retain safeguarding responsibility for those children. RCA staff and students will not usually be alone with or solely responsible for children and young people, or working regularly with the same group of children or young people.

Therefore this work would not be regarded as regulated activity relating to children within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the College would not, in these circumstances, have an entitlement to request Disclosure checks for staff or students.

Human Resources may however administer a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for a member of staff if it is a requirement of a job role or research project. The outcomes of staff DBS checks will be managed in accordance with the DBS Check Procedure.

The Research Office may administer a DBS check for a research student when the research ethics process has been followed and indicates that a check would be appropriate. The outcomes of research student DBS checks will be reviewed by Ethics committee chairs and

managed in accordance with the research ethics process and with support, where necessary, from Student Support.

7. Safeguarding Leads

The RCA's Safeguarding Lead is Heather Akif, Chief Operating Officer. The Safeguarding Lead (SL) is the first point of contact for staff or students who are concerned about the safety or well-being of a child, young person or 'at risk' adult. The Safeguarding Lead will take a proportional response to all safeguarding concerns raised.

The SL ensures that the RCA is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities and that the RCA's policies, procedures and activities comply with current legislation and best practice.

The Safeguarding Lead is the first point of contact for external agencies (such as the Police or Social Services) who need to raise a safeguarding concern with the College.

All urgent concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead:
Heather Akif, Chief Operating Officer, Royal College of Art (Heather.akif@rca.ac.uk) and the dedicated Safeguarding email address (safeguarding@rca.ac.uk).

In the 2024/25 academic year the Safeguarding Lead will be supported by the College's Pro Vice-Chancellors when responding to any urgent concerns.

Deputy Safeguarding Leads

Deputy Safeguarding Leads (DSL) take an active role in implementing and updating the Safeguarding Policy and promoting best practice across the institution. They may also be the first point of contact for staff or students who are concerned about the safety or well-being of a child, young person or 'at risk' adult if the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

Deputy Safeguarding Leads will be appointed in the 2024/25 academic year.

Safeguarding Champions

Safeguarding Champions are based in each School and Directorate. They are the first point of contact for staff and students looking for information and support regarding Safeguarding policy and procedures. They promote best practice within their School or Directorate.

Safeguarding Champions will be appointed in the 2024/25 academic year.

Footnotes

[1] <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/writing-a-safeguarding-policy-statement/>

[2]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

[3] <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/practice/questions>

[4]

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law>

The term 'young people' is used to refer to older or more experienced children, usually aged 16+.

[5] See p57 of this document for further guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

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