Balliol College
Safeguarding Policy

Updated: February 2026

1. Introduction

Balliol College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of its members and visitors. The College recognises it is likely that children and/or adults at risk will enter College premises or interact with College members in a number of circumstances.

This Policy recognises the welfare of children and/or adults at risk as a matter of paramount importance and aims to safeguard their well-being, in particular by protecting them from abuse of any kind. This Policy has been produced in response to, and should be read in conjunction with, the University of Oxford's *Code of Practice on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults*.

2. A copy of this Policy is available on the College website. **Scope**

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, 'child' or 'children' refers to a person or persons under the age of 18 (as defined in the *Children Act 2004*).

2.2. For the purposes of this policy 'adult at risk' refers to (as defined by the Department of Health) "those who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

2.3 For the purposes of this policy, a College Member is anyone at Balliol College, working with children and/or adults at risk whether as a fellow, employee, student or volunteer.

2.4 This Policy applies to all activities involving children and/or adults at risk and to all college members.

2.5 The College recognises that it has a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of children who come onto its premises or come into contact with its Members under the *Children Acts 1989 and 2004*, and the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*. It recognises its responsibilities as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCIE) 2025.

2.6 Where a college member occupies a position of trust with regard to children and/or adults at risk, an improper relationship with a child and/or adults at risk constitutes an abuse of trust under the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*.

2.7 The College also has certain powers, under the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*, to enquire as to the criminal records history of members to assess any risk to children and/or adults at risk.

3. Preventative Measures

3.1 The College's Lead Safeguarding Officer (CLSO) is the Domestic Bursar. The College's Designated Safeguarding Officer (CDSO) will depend on the specific event but in most cases will be the Outreach Officer. Contact details can be found in section 16 of this Policy. The CLSO and CDSO are required to undertake an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

3.2 The Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Implementing and promoting this Policy;
- Ensuring that the Policy is monitored and reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and/or adults at risk;
- Acting as the main contacts within the College for the protection of children and/or adults at risk;
- Ensuring that appropriate College Members are provided with information, advice and training on the protection of children and/or adults at risk;
- Establishing and maintaining contacts with the local Children's Social Care Services departments and Police; Ensuring training records and risk assessments are maintained and up to date.
- maintaining confidential records of reported abuse cases, safeguarding records, referral of information to external agencies, and actions taken.

3.3 Where a role may require college members to have unsupervised contact with, regularly care for, train, supervise or be in sole charge of children and/or adults at risk, the College will require satisfactory completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (at the appropriate level).

3.4 All College Members are expected to comply fully with the guidance and procedures set out in this Policy. The College will ensure that Members are fully briefed and/or trained (as appropriate) on the implications of this policy.

3.5 New college members will receive a copy of this Policy as part of the induction process and are expected to comply fully with the guidance and procedures set out in this Policy. The College will ensure they are fully briefed and/or trained (as appropriate) on the implications of this Policy.

3.6 This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by Executive Committee, with delegated authority from Balliol's governing body.

4. Forms of Abuse

The UK Government guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (1.33-1.36)*, defines four types of child abuse (all which apply equally to adults at risk):

Physical – the physical hurting or injuring of a child.

Emotional – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which results in severe or persistent adverse effects. Emotional abuse is often present in other categories of abuse, although it may occur independently.

Sexual - the forcing or enticing of a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material.

Neglect – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can include failure to provide the following: adequate food, clothing and shelter; protection from physical and emotional harm or danger; adequate supervision; access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

5 Recognising Abuse

The abuse of children and/or adults at risk can and does occur both within family and in institutional, community settings and online. The following may indicate that a child or adult at risk is being or has been abused:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries, particularly if such an injury is unlikely to have occurred accidentally;
- An injury for which the child's or adult's explanation appears inconsistent;
- The child describes an abusive act or situation;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour;
- The child appears distrustful of adults;
- The child is not allowed to be involved in normal social activities;
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or disheveled.

It is the responsibility of all college members to act on concerns in order to safeguard the welfare of the child or adult at risk.

6 Dealing with suspicion of abuse/allegations of abuse

6.1 Those working with children and adults at risk may:

- Have alleged abuse disclosed to them;
- Suspect abuse is being carried out;
- Be accused of abusing those in their charge.

Whilst these issues may require very different courses of action, it is essential that the safety and welfare of the child or adult at risk is priortised.

6.2 College members should address any concerns to the CDSO. If those concerns relate to the CDSO, college members are expected to discuss the matter with the CLSO or to contact Oxfordshire Social Services Department directly. If an individual feels that the CDSO or CLSO has not responded appropriately, then they are encouraged to contact Social Services without delay. Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality. Suspicions or allegations of abuse must not be discussed with anyone else other than those named in 3.1.

6.3 It is the CDSO responsibility to act on behalf of the College in dealing with allegations or suspicion of abuse. It is the task of Social Services, not the College, to investigate the matter, under S*ection 47* of the *Children Act 1989*. Under no circumstances should a college member conduct their own investigation into suspicions or allegations of abuse, neither should they question children closely, as to do so may distort any investigation that may be carried out subsequently by the Police or Social Services.

6.4 If a child or adult at risk says something or acts in such a way that abuse is suspected, the person receiving the information should:

- React in a calm but concerned way;
- Tell them that they are right to share what has happened, and that s/he is not responsible for what has happened;
- Find an early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared;
- Take what the child or adult at risk says seriously and allow the child to continue at his/her own pace;
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum (only clarify what the child or adult at risk is saying) and not ask a question that suggests a particular answer;
- Not interrupt the child when they are recalling significant events;
- Reassure the child or adult at risk that the problem can be dealt with;
- Tell the child or adult at risk what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared;
- Do not promise to keep secrets;
- Make a full record of what is said and done, though this should not result in a delay in reporting the problem.

6.5 The record should include:

- The child's or adult at risk's account of what has occurred;
- Any dates, times or places and any other potentially useful information;
- The nature of the allegation or concern;
- A description of any visible physical injury (clothing should not be removed to inspect the child or adult at risk).

6.6 The record may be used later in a criminal trial and it is vital that what the child or adult at risk discloses is recorded as accurately as possible. The record must be drafted in the child's or adult at risk's words and should not include the assumptions or opinions of others.

6.7 The problem should be reported immediately to the CDSO who will take the appropriate action, including informing the CLSO. If the concern arises out of normal office hours (evenings and weekends) contact should be made with the Social Services

Emergency Duty Team on 0800 833 408. In the case of children, advice can also be sought from the NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0800 800 5000. In an emergency, dial 999.

6.8 It is recognised that college members may need support after receiving a disclosure from a child or adult at risk, and appropriate support will be offered by the College. It is also recognised that it is important not to presume accused person's guilty and to offer them appropriate support.

6.9 All college members (including those with obligations to particular codes of conduct/professional ethics that may be thought to constrain their actions) are required to report or act on any disclosures or allegations of abuse that involve a college member and that have taken place at the College or on college business.

6.10 College members do not investigate serious allegations of child abuse themselves. Serious allegations will be reported to Oxfordshire Social Services and, if necessary, the police.

7. Procedure for dealing with allegations or suspicions about a College Member

7.1 It can be difficult to accept that a colleague may deliberately harm a child or adult at risk. When a concern arises, there are three processes that may need to take place:

- A child protection investigation (in the case of children);
- A criminal investigation;
- Action by the College/University to discipline or remove the Member.

7.2 Oxfordshire County Council employs a Local Authority Designated Officer, whose role is to give advice and guidance to employers and others who are concerned about an adult who works with children including volunteers and agency staff. Any suspicions or allegations should be addressed to the CDSO, as outlined in **6.1** above, who will inform the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) at the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The advice of the LADO will be followed appropriately.

8. Candidates for admissions interviews

8.1. Candidates for admission to Balliol are invited on an online interview selection process.

8.2 The College has established procedures for the interview process, designed to ensure safeguarding of candidates whilst also fulfilling selection requirements, including but not limited to:

(i) All admission interviews are to involve at least 2 college members on the interview panel.

(ii) Anyone involved in conducting undergraduate admissions interviews needs to have completed the University's compulsory initial and/or refresher interview and contextual data training, and to have watched the 'Introduction to Safeguarding under 18s' training video produced by Student Welfare and Support Services (SWSS) or on-line training provided by Oxford Safeguarding Children Board Level 1: Introduction to Safeguarding.

9. Students under the age of 18

9.1 The College may admit students who commence their studies before their 18th birthday. The College recognises that:

- Anyone under the age of 18, as a matter of law is a child;
- The College has special duties of care towards a child;
- The College is not *in loco parentis*, except in the case of a medical emergency where written permission has been previously obtained from the parent or guardian of the child.

9.2 The Undergraduate Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the CDSO, CLSO and relevant tutors are informed of the admission of any students under the age of 18.

9.3 The Undergraduate Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the hall, bar, lodge, housekeeping, accommodation, maintenance, and IT have the names of any students under the age of 18.

9.4 The Undergraduate Administrator is responsible for gaining written agreement from parents and students under the age of 18 that they accept the provisions put in place.

10 Planning an Activity

10.1 Any College Member who has responsibility for organising an activity involving children and/or adults at risk must nominate an individual to act as the designated safeguarding lead for the activity.

10.2 Activities should:

(i) be designed so that appropriate training and supervision is available to those working with children or adults at risk;
(ii) minimise occasions on which members will need to work alone in an unsupervised way with children or adults at risk; and
(iii) be appropriately risk assessed.

10.3 Every activity that involves children and/or adults at risk should be risk assessed, and the assessment should consider how the risks identified can be minimised. It should also outline the local processes for reporting concerns, as well as taking account of Health and Safety considerations. Once completed, the risk assessment must be approved by a Safeguarding Officer before the activity is undertaken. The risk assessment for any activity involving adults at risk or children should identify at least one individual who will act as the key contact point to deal with such matters. The nominated safeguarding contact for the activity is responsible for ensuring that concerns and allegations are escalated to the appropriate Safeguarding Officer without delay.

10.4 Completed risk assessments should be made available to all staff or volunteers involved in the activity.

10.5 It is expected that for visits by schools where members of staff of that school are in attendance, the school will complete its own risk assessment and take its own

child protection steps in accordance with local education authority guidelines.

10.6 Children and adults at risk who are participating in a college activity must, as part of their induction to the activity, be given clear information about how, and to whom, they can report concerns about any member of the College with whom they will be interacting. More than one point of contact should always be given and the details of the College's Safeguarding Officers included (in addition to the contact details of the nominated safeguarding lead for the activity) so that complaints can be made directly to these officers, where appropriate.

10.7 Activities run by external groups staying at the college (for example summer schools) are expected to have their own safeguarding leads and procedures, but should be explicitly informed prior to arrival that this is the College's expectation. They will be provided with relevant local/university safeguarding contact details and complete relevant risk assessment.

10.8 When children or adults at risk are staying in College accommodation, Scouts should aim to clean rooms while the children/adults at risk are not present in the room. If this is unavoidable, Scouts must ensure the door is kept open at all times whilst they are in the room. If maintenance staff or any other staff are required to attend to the room, maintenance staff must ensure they are in pairs and the door is kept open at all times.

11. Confidentiality

11.1 The College has an obligation to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals. Nevertheless, it is not always appropriate or sensible to promise complete confidentiality to informants in circumstances of alleged abuse. In some circumstances the College owes a duty of care to its students or visitors that cannot be fulfilled unless the College takes action on the basis of information that might have been provided in confidence. Anyone making an allegation of abuse should be assured that:

(i) The adult will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken.
(ii) The adult will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know'.
(iii) The adult will take whatever steps they can to protect the informing child or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.

11.2 There will be circumstances in which it is necessary for a Safeguarding Officer or other college member to share information with third parties such as the local authority, the police or the child's parents or guardians.
11.3 DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

12. Conduct around children and adults at risk

12.1 College Members should remember that inappropriate behaviour can occur via the telephone, internet and e-mail, as well as during direct interaction with children or adults at risk.

12.2 Conduct to be avoided:

(i) Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or adults at risk, away from others;
(ii) Taking children or adults at risk to your home;
(iii) Being alone in a vehicle with children or an adult at risk.
(iv) Significant communication through staff personal devices or social media.

12.3 Conduct never to be sanctioned:

(i) Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
(ii) Giving children or adults at risk inappropriate drugs or other inappropriate substances, including alcohol (please note that that one of the four key objectives of the *Licensing Act 2003* is the 'protection of children from harm' and that it is also an offence for a child to be supplied with or knowingly to consume alcohol on a licensed premises). Members should be aware that the College holds a Premises Licence and the Buttery does serve alcohol;
(iii) Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching;
(iv) Making sexually suggestive comments to children, even in jest;
(v) Allowing allegations made by a child or an adult at risk to go unreported;
(vi) Doing things of an intimate nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves.

12.4 College Members should:

(i) Treat everyone with fairness, equality and respect;
(ii) Be sensitive to appearance, race, culture, religious belief, sexuality, gender or disability;
(iii) Act as a good role model and challenge any unacceptable behaviour from children/adults at risk or from other college members;
(iv) Report all allegations or suspicions of child abuse using the Procedures outlined in this Policy;
(v) Consider whether contact with an individual child or adult at risk should involve a colleague's being present;
(vi) Be aware that physical and online contact with a child or adult at risk may be misinterpreted;
(vii) Retain a professional approach to children or adults at risk, including avoiding physical contact with a child;
(viii) Respect the right to privacy and, in residential accommodation, not enter a child's bedroom or the bedroom of an adult at risk without prior authorisation except in the case of an emergency.

12.5 The *Sexual Offences Act 2003* provides that intimate contact between an adult and a child, where that adult was in a 'position of trust' to the child is a criminal offence. Those in a 'position of trust' include those who have regular unsupervised contact with a child, or where an adult looks after a child at an educational institution at which the adult is not also receiving education.

12.6 It may be necessary for College Members to take photographs or make videos of children for educational research, teaching purposes, or publication. An image of a

child is personal data for the purposes of the *Data Protection Act 2008*. Where images are stored in a way that makes the data subject identifiable, or where the images are used for publication (online and print), written consent should be obtained before the images are created. If the data subject is capable of comprehending the implications of consenting to the data use, then their consent should be sought; otherwise, the consent of the parent or legal guardian should be obtained. Whenever an image of a child or vulnerable adult is published, the data subject should, as far as is practicable, be unidentifiable.

13. Child on child abuse13.1 All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of college premises and online.

13.2 It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviors between children that are abusive in nature. Examples of which are listed below:

- Bullying
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical and online abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Causing some to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of intimate images or videos
- Upskirting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, both physical and online

13.3 College members must respond and record all signs, reports and concerns about child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of College premises and online.

13 Training

13.1 Any member of the College who will be planning activities with children must complete appropriate training as identified by the risk assessment process.

13.2 Anyone holding the role of Safeguarding Officer will undergo detailed training in safeguarding issues on a regular basis.

13.4 New college staff will receive relevant information on child protection and safeguarding at induction programme.

13.5 Student helpers will be provided with initial training on Child Protection and safeguarding matters, and will be given refresher training as appropriate.

13.6 A record of all training must be kept, with training certificates recorded with HR department.

14 Recruitment and Vetting

14.1 Balliol College takes all appropriate steps to safeguard children or adults at risk and ensure that the staff directly and regularly working with children or adults at risk are recruited using a safer recruitment approach, including the following:

(i) applicants complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
(ii) there are no unexplained career gaps.
(iii) Employment references

14.2 Decisions regarding which staff roles require safer recruitment practices are made by HR or the Undergraduate Administrator on the basis of information provided during recruitment process. Roles which may require a DBS check include:

(i) Staff working with children and adults at risk.
(ii) Counsellors, and any others providing treatment, therapy, or healthcare.
(iii) Staff who carry out frequent, unsupervised outreach work in schools.
(iv) Research staff and PhD students involved in supervising children or adults at risk in the course of conducting the research.
Staff who hold alcohol licenses.

15 People with Specific Responsibility for Child Protection

15.1 Roles

The designated staff are responsible for:

Procedure

(i) Holding and being conversant with current local and national Child Protection procedures.
(ii) Keeping up to date through training. It is a requirement that this takes place at least every two years.
(iii) Reviewing and updating the College's Safeguarding Policies and inter agency working. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the policies and procedures must be remedied without delay.
(iv) Liaison over safeguarding matters with the local Social Services Department.

Raising Awareness

(i) Briefing and guiding those in regular contact with children or adults at risk in College on Safeguarding matters. This includes the briefing of new staff as part of their induction.
(ii) Keeping close contact with all staff and maintaining awareness of Safeguarding and the need to raise any concerns immediately with the CLSO.
(iii) Ensuring that the Safeguarding procedures are followed within the college, that each member has access to the procedures and has an understanding of them.
(iv) The Safeguarding procedures must be available to parents and teachers of children working with the college on request.

Referrals

Receiving reports of alleged or suspected child abuse within the College, or reported by a child relating to incidents at home or outside the College, contacting the Children's Social Care and taking any other action in response, as set out below:

(i) Keeping records
(ii) Liaising with the staff

Liaising with the CLSO**15.2** The Governing Body is responsible for undertaking an annual review of:

(i) The College's Safeguarding policy and procedures.
(ii) The efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

16. Contact and Further Information

16.1 College Contacts

College Lead Safeguarding Officer (CLSO): Domestic Bursar, Jennifer Smith
domestic.bursar@balliol.ox.ac.uk

College Designated Safeguarding Officer (CDSO): Pravahi Osman, David Freeman
Outreach Officer outreach@balliol.ox.ac.uk

16.2 University Safeguarding Guidance

Safeguarding 'at risk' adults and children | HR Support

Safeguarding code of practice - April 2024

16.3 Oxfordshire Children's Social Care

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is to be contacted for urgent queries. MASH is a partnership between Oxford City Council. Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, The National Probation Service, NHS health services, South Central Ambulance Service and Drug and Alcohol Services.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | Oxfordshire County Council

Telephone: 0345 050 7666

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) gives advice and guidance to employers and others who are concerned about an adult who works with children including volunteers and agency staff.

LADO for Oxfordshire is Jo Lloyd. lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01865 810 603

16.4 Other agencies

For Children: Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board: www.oscb.org.uk
For adults at risk: Oxfordshire Safe From Harm www.osab.co.uk 01865 810603
NSPCC Helpline: Telephone 0800 800 5000 (24 hours)