

## St John's College, Durham

### Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

#### Introduction

1. This document sets out the safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy of St John's College, Durham. It is based on the latest policy of the Church of England *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017) and is also consistent with the Durham University Safeguarding Policies [Safeguarding - Durham University](#).
2. St John's College is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and service. The College will take appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all. Established in 1909 within the Anglican tradition, the College endorses the principles and foundations for safeguarding set out by the Church of England in *Promoting a Safer Church*. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>

#### Context

3. St John's College comprises two halls: John's Hall, where members may be undergraduates or postgraduates across a range of disciplines, and Cranmer Hall, where members may be ordinands (students approved for training for ministry in the Church of England), Free Church Pathway students sponsored by local churches, or independent students studying theology and ministry at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Members of staff are all employees of St John's College as a whole, although some work directly within either John's Hall or Cranmer Hall. St John's College is constituent college of Durham University; while Safeguarding policy is agreed at College level, the College will work with, and align itself to, University policies and procedures wherever appropriate.
4. While there are differences in some areas of safeguarding process between John's Hall and Cranmer Hall (and different designated officers), there is a joint approach to policy and oversight and scrutiny of this policy lies with the College Council as a whole.
5. St John's College also houses a number of Research Centres and Projects, all of which report to College Council via the Research Centres Committee. All Research Centres operate within the College Safeguarding Policy, with either the Dean of Anglican Formation or Vice Principal as Designated Safeguarding Officer. Some Research Centres will issue specific safeguarding practice guidance to those who work within them. This guidance will be consistent with the College Policy and will be reviewed annually by the Research Centres Committee.
6. St John's College does not provide any childcare service directly to children or young people under 18. While it does welcome the children of St John's College staff and



students in for worship and meals, and children of staff and students for family friendly events, they remain at all times under the care and supervision of their parents/carers. Event organisers and volunteers, whether students or staff, are required be familiar with this Safeguarding Policy and to follow the Code of Conduct set out in Durham University's Safeguarding Children Policy, paragraph 5.2. Students who have the primary care of children and young people are not given accommodation within the main communal college buildings; they reside in family homes away from the College site.

- 6.1. Should a student resident in a college communal building become pregnant, plans should be made to arrange alternative accommodation appropriate to the care of the child alongside the arrangements being made for continuing study.
  - 6.2. For commercial events, such as conferences and alumni reunions, the College will request, where relevant, to receive the organisation's safeguarding policy and/or risk assessments where children are present. College practices will be adapted to the needs of each individual group or organisation, as appropriate (e.g. ensuring that groups including minors moving from building to building are accompanied by an appropriate adult).
7. We recognise the University's commitment to seeing and treating students as independent, adult learners. The University does also allow, under certain circumstances, students to begin a course of study aged under 18. The College follows the University policy for students aged under 18, noting this is due for review in the academic year 2024-25. St John's College ensures students under the age of 18 are accommodated in a single room (not shared) and their photo and name are shared when necessary (e.g. Bar staff) to ensure they are not served alcohol on our premises while a minor. The College will carry out risk assessments for housing students aged under 18.

### Policy Areas

8. The College's Safeguarding Policy falls into six main areas.

#### Policy Area 1: Promoting a safe environment and culture

9. The College will strive to create and maintain environments that are safe for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions for children, young people<sup>1</sup> and vulnerable adults. This is the responsibility of all who work in the College, and particularly those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- 9.1. In *Promoting a Safer Church* a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as 'a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired'. Thus the College recognises that any student or member of staff may at some point be defined as a

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy young people/person means any individual(s) aged 14-17 years old.



'vulnerable adult' or adult 'at risk'. This may particularly be possible at a time of transition to new independence and demanding study.

10. The College will strive to support all those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

10.1. The College requires as a matter of policy that all 1-1 tutorial meetings and student support meetings in person take place either in a public space, in a room with a partially-glazed door, or with the door left partially open. It also requires that prayer ministry, when offered in the context of public worship, takes place where it can be seen by others.

10.2. St John's College students, when they are on placement, undertaking volunteering, or serving in a local church, chaplaincy, school or equivalent, are responsible for familiarising themselves with local safeguarding policies and practice and for complying with them.

10.3. The College requires of all students and staff that no photos be taken during corporate acts of worship, or events where children are present, with specific exceptions (see 10.4 and 10.5) including the live streaming of College Communion, for which provision is made for those who do not wish to be filmed.

10.4. Where College organised family social events are arranged, the publicity and communications inform parents and carers that photos may be taken at each event. College will be restricted to 'long view' shots or photos without minors. Other participants may take photos on their own devices at such events. Parents and carers can 'opt out' of photos and detail of how is given when the event is promoted.

10.5. Where photos with minors are being taken for marketing purposes, this will only be done with the prior agreement of College Officers or Cranmer Hall Officers (as appropriate), and the written consent of parents will be secured, with advice given on how the photos will be stored, for how long and how they will be used.

11. As part of promoting a safe environment and culture, the College commits to clear lines of accountability and responsibility for safeguarding.

11.1. The Principal of the College holds overall responsibility for the execution of this Safeguarding Policy.

11.2. Within each Hall there is a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

11.3. Within John's Hall the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Vice Principal. The John's Hall DSO deals with any concerns relating to John's Hall



undergraduates and postgraduates, together with all College staff other than those working directly within Cranmer Hall. The John's Hall DSO will also deal with any concerns raised by any Research Centre or Project falling within their purview. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer for John's Hall is the Assistant Principal.

- 11.4. Within Cranmer Hall the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Dean of Anglican Formation. The Church of England also requires there to be a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO), and this is currently the Lecturer in Mission and Evangelism. The Cranmer Hall DSO and DDSO deal with any concerns relating to Cranmer Hall students together with Cranmer Hall tutorial and admin staff, and any Research Centres falling within their purview.
- 11.5. Within College Council as the Governing Body, a Designated Council Trustee holds particular responsibility for safeguarding, supporting Council and the Designated Safeguarding Officers in monitoring safeguarding activity, policies and procedures to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and Charity Commission requirements.
- 11.6. As home to a Theological Education Institution (TEI) within the Church of England, the College is also required to make an annual report to the local bishop, the Bishop of Durham, on safeguarding policy, procedures, practice and review within Cranmer Hall.

**Policy Area 2: Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the College**

12. The College will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the College, in accordance with the relevant practice guidance.
  - 12.1. The following College staff will be required to have a DBS check as appropriate to their role before taking up their posts: College Officers, Cranmer Hall Tutors, Reception Porters (Evening & Weekend), Resident Tutors, the Assistant Principal and the Student Support & Enrichment Officer, and any staff acting as College Duty Officer. Research Centres will give their own guidance in line with this policy and conduct DBS checks accordingly. DBS checks will be renewed in accordance with appropriate regulations.
  - 12.2. All ordinands are required to have completed a satisfactory DBS check prior to starting training. Their DBS certificates will be checked by the Cranmer Hall admin on commencement of training. Free Church students will also normally have completed DBS checks via their sponsoring church, and these will be confirmed in the same manner as ordinands. If a Free Church student has not completed a DBS check, they will be required to do so.



- 12.3. In line with University policy, other students within the College, including independent students at Cranmer Hall, will not be required to complete a DBS check, unless they are involved in programmes of study which necessitate interaction with children, young people or vulnerable adults. For example, independent students at Cranmer Hall will require a DBS check if they are studying on the Certificate in Theology, Mission and Ministry with a Children or Youth Focus.
- 12.4. The College will follow a supportive and confidential process for staff recruitment and receiving blemished DBS checks.
13. The College will equip and train all those who have responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll-out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training.
- 13.1. All ordinands students are required to complete the Church of England's Foundation Level training as part of their discernment process; ordinands are further required to undertake the Leadership module before being ordained. Free Church students will be required to undertake Foundation Level training (or equivalent) in their sponsoring church prior to starting at Cranmer Hall and will be required to undertake Leadership level Safeguarding training either at Cranmer Hall or in their local church before completion of their training pathway.
- 13.2. All Cranmer Hall tutorial staff are required to undertake regular Leadership training. John's Hall Resident Tutors, and all other College Staff at Level 3 or above are required to undertake the University online safeguarding training. Research Centres will undertake commensurate training. Staff at levels 1-2 who have regular interactions with students, children and/or vulnerable adults will receive in house training in the form of annual safeguarding workshops.
- 13.3. The Cranmer Hall DSO and DDSO are required to undertake any additional training that is asked of them by the Church of England. The John's Hall DSO complies with the training requirements of Durham University.

### **Policy Area 3: Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation**

14. Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the College will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the relevant policy and practice guidance from the Church of England and the University of Durham.
- 14.1. All staff and ordinands are required to follow the training they have received – either from the Church of England or the University – in responding to a



safeguarding concern. An outline approach is detailed in para 3.2. of the Durham University Safeguarding Children Policy.

14.2. Whatever the level of concern, it is required that this information is shared as soon as reasonably possible with the DSO of the relevant Hall(s). Cranmer Hall staff and students should speak to Cranmer Hall DSO or DDSO. John's Hall students, tutorial staff together with College staff should speak to the John's Hall DSO.

15. All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the relevant safeguarding practice guidance.

15.1. Both the person with whom the concern is originally raised and the relevant DSO should keep written records of the meeting and keep them in a secure online location.

15.2. If the concern relates to a member of staff, the DSO should keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and details of any action taken and decisions reached. This should be kept in a secure online location, and a note recorded in the employee's personnel file. A copy should also be given to the individual. Retention of this data will be in line with relevant data retention policies on safeguarding.

16. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser, or other designated safeguarding adviser, to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

16.1. The Cranmer Hall DSO and DDSO will always consult with the Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) about any safeguarding concern relating to a Cranmer Hall student or staff member. This should take place within one working day of the concern being raised.

16.1.1. Should the concern be about a Cranmer staff member who holds a Bishop's Licence, (as a clergy person or licensed lay minister) and the DSA consider that the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities has been reached, the DSA shall be responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is informed, in line with diocesan policy.<sup>2</sup> The DSA shall also convene a Core Group in line with diocesan policy.

16.1.2. Should the concern be about an ordinand, the Cranmer Hall DSO will always inform and consult the DSA of the sponsoring diocese. The relevant DSA will be responsible for ensuring that, if the threshold for reporting is reached, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is informed, in line with their

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<sup>2</sup> For reference, see here [the Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of Durham](#).



diocesan policy. The DSA shall also convene a Core Group in line with their diocesan policy.

- 16.2. Should the concern relate to a Free Church student, it may be necessary for the Cranmer Hall DSO and Durham Diocese DSA to involve other bodies in their discussion, for example the Northern Baptist College. The decision to do so will rest with the Cranmer Hall DSO and Durham Diocese DSA.
- 16.3. The John's Hall DSO will consult with the Durham University Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer (DLSO) about any concern relating to a John's Hall student, tutor or College staff member (other than Cranmer Hall staff). The DLSO will be responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is informed, in line with University policy.
- 16.4. Notwithstanding the policy outlined above, either DSO should feel able, if a child or vulnerable adult is considered to be under immediate risk, to contact either the police or local social services. Where possible, consent should be given by the child's guardians / parents or the vulnerable adult, unless it is considered that seeking consent will increase the risk of harm.
17. In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to staff or students, the College will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.
18. The following whistleblowing and complaints procedure is available for any member of the College who is unhappy with the way their concern has been addressed by a member of staff or the relevant DSO or who feels unable to use the standard reporting procedures for whatever reason.
19. Any member of the College who such concerns should contact the Designated Council Trustee who may be contacted via the Principal's Office on [prin.exec@durham.ac.uk](mailto:prin.exec@durham.ac.uk). The Designated Council Trustee should also be contacted if there is a concern about either of the DSOs.
20. Following such a complaint, the Designated Council Trustee will consult with either the DSA or DLSO as appropriate and will make an initial written response to the whistleblower/complainant within ten working days.

#### **Policy Area 4: Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons**

21. The College will endeavour to offer care and support to all those in their care that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
22. The College is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse.



23. Those who have suffered abuse connected to St John's College will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The College will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with this policy and the practice guidance of the Church of England and University. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support – according to the agreed need.
24. An appropriate pastoral response to the family and wider College community will be considered, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

**Policy Area 5: Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons**

25. The College, in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law of any accused staff member or student. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and (where appropriate) Church inquiry process. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.
26. The College will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any member of staff or student is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement.
27. College staff and students who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families but also the wider College community. The College will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and the wider College community affected by the concerns or allegations.

**Policy Area 6: Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others**

28. The College is not a closed community and welcomes the families of students in for meals, together with members of the public for worship services in the College Chapel. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of this wider College community who may present a known risk.
29. The College will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law.





### **Reporting and Review**

30. The DSOs of John's Hall and Cranmer Hall will inform the Designated Council Trustee of any safeguarding concern which is taken forward either by a DSA or the DLSO, and this will also be reported to, when appropriate, Cranmer Hall Officers, College Officers and the subsequent Council meeting.
31. The Warden or Dean of Anglican Formation of Cranmer Hall will report to each meeting of the Cranmer Committee about the operation of the Safeguarding Policy within Cranmer Hall. This will include reporting on any informal conversations undertaken with the DSA.
32. The Designated Safeguarding Officers and the Designated Council Trustee, led by the Principal, will be responsible for regular review of this policy, and propose such amendments to Council as they see fit.
33. The College Council will review and renew the Safeguarding Policy annually, usually at its autumn meeting.

*Approved by College Council on 6 December 2024.*