



**carmel
college**

SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS

**CHILD PROTECTION
& THE PROTECTION OF
VULNERABLE ADULTS (POVA)
POLICY**

OCT 2008

PROCEDURE TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE SAFEGUARDED

INTRODUCTION

This procedure contains two Sections:

- 1 *Guidance for staff in the event of a child protection or vulnerable adult concern.*
- 2 *Information for dealing with disclosure of a disability.*

SECTION I

CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

In the event of a child or vulnerable adult safeguarding concern about an individual student when working within the college setting, members of the college should:

- Contact one of the *Child or Vulnerable Adult (VA) Safeguarding Co-ordinators* and discuss the concern. This will ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to the needs of individual students and that all relevant information is collated.
- The Child or VA Safeguarding Co-ordinator may use *guidance from Social Services* or *Police* (if appropriate) to decide the action to be taken, and inform the person raising the concern of the decision.
- All concerns and decisions should be recorded. Where issues of a *confidential* nature are involved the College Nurse will supply the relevant pro-forma.
- If the person raising the concern is not satisfied that the action taken is appropriate, advice should be sought from the *Principal* or from the *Designated LEA Officer*. If necessary, a referral may be made directly to Social Services.
- It is important to maintain a dialogue with the Child or VA Safeguarding Co-ordinator to ensure that any appropriate support is given to the student.

If a concern arises outside the college environment, but during the College day, members of the College should:

- Contact the College Child or VA Safeguarding Co-ordinator to discuss the concern, as stated above.
- If this person is unavailable or such discussion is impossible, advice should be sought from the Principal, or anyone from CMT, the designated LEA officer or Customer Services. If necessary, a referral can be made directly to Social Services.
- Actions / concerns should be recorded and a copy of the information passed to the College when notifying them.
- Outside working hours, referrals should be made directly to the Contact Centre Advisors for Adults & Children Services. All actions / concerns should be recorded and fed back to the college.

Each LEA service provides more detailed guidance for staff and training is made available.

NB: Child & VA Safeguarding Co-ordinators:

- *College Nurse*
- *Assistant Principal Student Services*

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Should any student have a cause for concern, either regarding another member of the College community or themselves, the recommended course of action is outlined in the Student Handbook. (Students' Complaints Procedure.)

TRAINING

- ❖ Whole staff training is provided in-house as part of the cross-college INSET programme.
- ❖ Safeguarding Co-ordinators undertake training from Local Authority and national bodies as and when appropriate.
- ❖ Training is reviewed annually as appropriate.

SECTION II

DISABILITY & LEARNING DIFFICULTIES – DISCLOSURE PROCEDURE

Why is disclosure important?

The DDA expects all educational institutions not to discriminate against students who may have a disability or learning difficulty. In order to avoid discrimination, Carmel College will need to know about a person's disability. Students are encouraged to disclose any disability before they come to College. A student may also tell someone about their disability when the course has already started.

Opportunities for disclosure

- Open Evening
- Preliminary interview
- Admissions Day
- On-course to Subject Tutor
- On-course to Group Tutor
- Chaplain
- Assistant Principal
- Nurse
- Head of Faculty
- Exam Officer
- Careers Officer
- Support staff / MIS / EMA / First Aid Officer

Students may worry about telling someone about their disability in case they are discriminated against. It is not compulsory to disclose, but it will ensure that students receive appropriate support during their course. Carmel College is sensitive and responsive in its approach to disclosure.

Disclosure can be verbal or written to any member of the College staff, and as soon as this takes place, College is then aware of a student's individual needs. Carmel College would then be liable to meet these needs and so a written record of disclosure is essential at this point.

Confidentiality

Under the Data Protection Act (1988) any information which relates to physical or mental health is sensitive, and personal data and permission must be obtained before passing this information onto a third party. It is therefore important that the student provides written consent before any information relating to their disability or learning difficulty can be shared with others.

The DDA gives students the right to request that the nature of their individual needs be treated as confidential, and students can also change the level of confidentiality at any time. To allow this to take place, students are given two options regarding the level of confidentiality.

- (i) *The information can be passed to anyone who reasonably needs to know.*
- (ii) *The information is restricted to the person to whom they have disclosed their disability.*

Determining who reasonably needs to know

If any adjustments need to be made following disclosure, it is important that staff who are responsible for making those adjustments should be informed. At Carmel College this would be the Learning Co-ordinator, who would pass on relevant details to appropriate staff.

What should I do if a student discloses a disability to me?

Carmel College has designated forms to help staff keep a record of student discussions relating to individual needs. These can be obtained from the Learning Support Co-ordinator. Although staff may want to keep brief notes relating to the discussion, do not complete the Disclosure Form in the following circumstances:

- ❖ *If the student has already disclosed their disability to someone else, eg the Learning Mentors / Dyslexia support or during the Admissions process.*
- ❖ *If the student has already completed a form with another tutor.*
- ❖ *If the student does not have a disability eg has a broken leg or flu. This information will be given to the College Nurse.*

It is important to go through the Disclosure Form carefully with the student, and ensure that the following points are made:

- *The benefits of disclosure.*
- *Who would have access to information discussed.*
- *The consequences of giving or withholding consent.*

Some useful guidelines

- Make sure that the process of disclosure is clearly explained. Some students may not fully understand the implications of what they have signed.
- When recording information on the form, keep the language clear and simple. Emphasise the support requirements, and avoid diagnostic language.

Implications of a confidentiality request

When a student requests complete confidentiality, it may be necessary to make additional adjustments to make sure the disclosure remains private. In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, consideration must be given to the extent to which making the adjustment is consistent with the confidentiality request. In some cases this might mean an adjustment is made in an alternative way to ensure confidentiality. It could also mean that no adjustment can be provided.

Ultimately it is the student who makes the final decision, but it must be made clear during discussion the disadvantages of not disclosing a disability. There may be other ways of maintaining confidentiality and these should be explored. Carmel College has an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments following any disclosure and there are several support measures already in place which can be adapted according to individual support needs.

Exceptional circumstances

There are times when the confidentiality agreement may be broken:

- *When the student is in danger of harming themselves or others.*
- *There is a legal requirement to disclose the information.*

(This should be made clear to the student before the agreement is made.)

What to do following disclosure

- 1 Once the student has completed the form it must be passed to the Learning Support Co-ordinator.
- 2 The Learning Support Co-ordinator will pass a copy of the form to:
 - *Staff who will need to make the adjustments.*
 - *MIS.*
 - *Other disability contacts if necessary.*
 - *Learning Mentors when appropriate.*
- 3 If the adjustments are reasonable and able to be put in place, these should be recorded on the Disclosure Form. If unsure whether the individual needs can be provided, the Learning Support Co-ordinator would contact the appropriate service.
- 4 When the appropriate Disclosure Form has been received, the Learning Support Co-ordinator will contact the student to organize a detailed assessment of needs and implement any adjustments requested.
- 5 If the student has requested confidentiality, keep the form securely for future record. If there are any adjustments which seem reasonable and which can be made without breaching confidentiality, these should be carried out and a note made on the Disclosure Form.

Not all disabilities and learning difficulties will require reasonable adjustments to be made. Some students may simply want to make someone aware of the impairment / health / condition.

If further information is required concerning disclosure, please contact the Learning Support Co-ordinator:

Linda Carr

Tel: (01744 – 452273)

Email: linda@carmel.ac.uk

APPENDIX 1 – REFERENCES TO ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- *Risk Assessment.*
- *Student disciplinary / guidance.*
- *Health & Safety Policy.*
- *HR Recruitment Policy.*
- *Equality & Diversity.*