

**Middlesex University Students’ Union – Safeguarding Policy**

1. **Policy Statement**

* It is the policy of the Union to ensure that MDXSU is a friendly, welcoming and safe environment for the benefit of all students and visitors, both face to face and virtually.
* The Safeguarding Policy aims to promote the wellbeing of everyone who comes into contact with its staff, elected officers, representatives and volunteers.
* This is achieved through preventing harm, responding to harm in an appropriate manner and promoting the wider welfare of vulnerable people.

1. **General Principles**

* As a student’s age or vulnerable status will not always be evident, the Union extends the best practices for dealing with young people or adults at risk to all students, whilst at the same time acknowledging their independence and autonomy.
* The fundamental principle, both in law and good practice, is that whenever the interests of a child, young person or adult at risk are involved, their welfare must always be paramount.
* The Union aims to foster an environment whereby anyone is able to raise any concerns about the safety or wellbeing or any individuals participating in or benefiting from its services and activities and that there will be adequate procedures in place to address these concerns.
* The Union recognises that dealing with a safeguarding concern and/or a disclosure can be stressful for Union representatives. In all instances, support should be provided to Union representatives involved in a situation.

1. **Responsibilities**

* The overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Trustee Board.
* The Trustee Board delegates day to day responsibility to the Chief Executive who is the designated Lead Safeguarding Officer and will determine who are the nominated Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officers.
* It is the responsibility of every line manager to implement the policy and ensure staff and volunteers in their area are aware of and comply with this policy. Union representatives should use the guidance in appendix A when dealing with a disclosure. They should also alert the Chief Executive or nominated Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officers to any safeguarding risks as they arise.
* The HR Coordinator is responsible for providing adequate provisions for recruitment, selection and ongoing supervision of staff and volunteers that comply with employment law, equity and inclusion and selection guidance. Safeguarding training should be delivered as appropriate and DBS checks will be required for those who have substantial contact with children, young people and adults at risk. DBS checks will not automatically be required for staff, elected officers or representatives or Union volunteers coming into contact with young students of those at risk in the course of normal Union activity.

1. **Procedure for raising a safeguarding concern**

* All Union representatives have a duty to raise any safeguarding concerns with an appropriate contact, including all instances where this is any concern, suspicion or allegation that either a child, young person or adult at risk has been, is being, or is likely to be subjected to harm, abuse or neglect, or is at risk of harming themselves or others.
* Concern around imminent risk of danger or harm: Where there is concern of imminent risk of danger or harm, staff should use the appropriate emergency contact from the list below, and then immediately contact a key Safeguarding Contact.
  + If the person at risk is on campus: Call ‘Care and Concern’ 020 8411 5555 or Campus Security 020 8411 6200. Security can also be reached at the Security Office in the Quad, College Building.
  + If the person at risk is off campus: Call the emergency services 999.
* No concern about imminent risk of danger or harm: If a Union representative is concerned for the safety or wellbeing of an individual and there is no imminent risk of danger or harm, the staff member should refer to Care & Concern [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=iHvjOKGjz0ifBWU3Qn_tJFOaD1fEP25GgJUyMCPBjxdURERBMjE3RDVTS1ZTMDhDQjlPR05SMjhDTCQlQCN0PWcu) or alternatively email [careandconcern@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:careandconcern@mdx.ac.uk)
* Where possible, it is best practice to obtain consent.

1. **Procedure for breaching confidentiality**

* The Union understands confidentiality to mean that no identifying sensitive personal information disclosed to a representative of the Union by any student engaging in Union activities, societies, events and/or using Union services shall be given directly or indirectly to any organisation or individual external to the Union, without that students’ expressed consent to disclose such information.
* The Union recognises that occasions may arise where representatives of the Union feel they need to breach confidentiality. An example of such an occasion would be if we felt there was a serious risk or harm, either to the student or to others.
* Where a representative of the Union feels that confidentiality should be breached, the following steps must be taken:
  + If there is imminent risk: Where a representative of the Union feels that there is an immediate danger of harm, either to a student themselves or to others, they should use the appropriate emergency contact (020 8411 5555 if the person they are concerned about is on campus, 999 if the person they are concerned about it off campus), and then immediately contact a key Safeguarding Contact. The Key Safeguarding Contact will follow the procedure below but will do so retrospectively.
  + If there is no imminent risk: Where there is a significant risk or harm, but not necessarily an imminent risk, permission to talk to someone else should **always** be sought (in practice this is rarely refused). The University is often the main source of support for Middlesex students, and it is usual to notify them, via [Care & Concern](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=iHvjOKGjz0ifBWU3Qn_tJFOaD1fEP25GgJUyMCPBjxdURERBMjE3RDVTS1ZTMDhDQjlPR05SMjhDTCQlQCN0PWcu), of any serious concerns due to their responsibilities to students, extensive support infrastructure and access to other information.
* Where permission to refer on hasn’t been granted, the representative should raise the matter immediately with a key Safeguarding Contact and discuss with them why they feel confidentiality should be breached. The key Safeguarding contact should take written notes of this discussion.
* The key Safeguarding Contact is responsible for making a decision on whether confidentiality should be breached in the circumstances and should take a written note of this decision. The immediacy of a suicide risk, for example, will be affected by the degree of planning a person has done, the type of suicide method planned or already attempted, and circumstances such as being left alone, refusing treatment, drinking heavily or drug use.
* If the key Safeguarding Contact decides that confidentiality is to be breached then they should:
  + Contact either the Chief Executive of the Union or one of the Heads of Department and brief them on the full facts of the case and their decision to breach confidentiality. The Chief Executive or Department Head can override this decision if they do not feel that the circumstances of the case warrant breaching a student’s confidentiality. Both the key Safeguarding Contact and the Chief Executive/Department Head should take written notes of the discussion and decision.
  + Take detailed notes accurately recording the discussion, decision and actions taken in relation to the case. These notes should be stored securely and confidentially alongside written notes from the Chief Executive or Head of Department.
* Where a student’s permission to refer on has not been given, they are fully entitled to complain about a decision to breach their confidentiality using the Union’s [complaints procedure](https://www.mdxsu.com/complaints).

**Appendix A**

**Procedure for the First Responder**

* In an instance where a student has disclosed a possible safeguarding concern, it’s important to stay calm and establish if there is an imminent risk (e.g. talking about suicidal thoughts is different to making preparations to enact those thoughts). Union representatives dealing with a disclosure should follow the guidance below:
  + Offer to take the student to a safe, quiet space where you will not be overheard or interrupted. Try to tell a colleague what you are doing. If the disclosure if remote (by phone/chat/email/social media), ask them to find a safe space if they have not already.
  + Check if the student would prefer to speak to someone of a different gender.
  + Be aware that they may have been threated and/or may be frightened.
  + Let the person talk and listen carefully to what they are saying, keeping calm.
  + Reassure the person that they are right to talk about it and accept what they say as fact.
  + Ask open questions (e.g. What do you think would help you right now?)
  + Be open about your concerns and let them know that to help them someone else must be told (never promise confidentiality as you may not be able to guarantee it)
  + Involve them in the process and let them know what will happen next.
  + Talk to a key Safeguarding Contact as soon as possible about your concerns, but do not talk to anyone else who doesn’t have a legitimate ‘need to know’.
  + Record the basic details: date, time, name of student, name of alleged perpetrator if known/relevant, and any other information/signposting that you offer. (You are not an investigator or evidence gatherer. There have been occasions where longer notes made by a first responder have been used to the person’s detriment in court proceedings, so be brief and record the basics).