

Access and Participation Safeguarding Policy			
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Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.

1. Purpose and Aims

- 1.1. This Policy and the associated procedure apply to SOAS outreach, access and student recruitment (pre-entry) activities, and all staff associated with the delivery of these activities, including Student Ambassadors, members of the wider SOAS community contracted by the Access, Experience and Success (AES) team or UK Student Recruitment team (UKSR) who may come into contact with a young person as part of their work or activities.
- 1.2. SOAS is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all within our learning community – including students, staff and visitors who access the University's facilities and services. The policy has been developed in accordance with the University's obligations as set out in the Equality Act (2010), Public Sector Equality Duty, the SOAS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and SOAS Safeguarding Policy.
- 1.3. The aim of this policy is to ensure that young people aged 18 years and under, who engage with the AES/UKSR work are safeguarded from risk of harm, and that the AES/UKSR teams have appropriate procedures in place to protect staff who engage with that activity, making them aware of the need to safeguard both the young people and themselves. Most staff will have only limited contact with those young people under 18 years of age, through such activities as visiting schools and colleges to give talks and delivering summer schools on campus, it is important that they do not put themselves, or their audiences, into a vulnerable position. SOAS must ensure that all young people who are participating in outreach/student recruitment activities organised by the AES/UKSR team can do so in a safe and secure environment and that parents, carers, schools, colleges and community groups have confidence in SOAS' arrangements.
- 1.4. SOAS acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of under-18s and those deemed to be adults at risk. SOAS defines an adult at risk as an adult, over the age of 18, who may require services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation. However, SOAS recognises its responsibility to the

whole community who may, at a particular time, need to be protected from exploitation whether that be financial, sexual, criminal, extremist or political ends, emotional abuse, domestic abuse, or grooming.

- 1.5. SOAS expects that all staff, students and volunteers accept the fundamental principle and legal requirement that in any given situation, the welfare of a child (any young person under the age of 18) or adult at risk is of paramount importance.
- 1.6. Relevant legislation: The Policy is informed by a collection of legislation and guidance, including:
 - Children Act 1989, 2004
 - Data Protection Act 1998,
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003,
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006,
 - Equality Act 2010,
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012,
 - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015,
 - Protecting Vulnerable Adults 2017

2. Scope

2.1. Responsibilities

At all times the health, safety and welfare of children under the age of 18 years of age are paramount. To ensure that this is put into practice the AES and UKSR teams will commit to warrant that:

- All young people who engage in outreach/student recruitment activities will receive appropriate support and protection, aligned to safeguarding protocols;
- Any young person suffering significant harm is identified and responded to appropriately and quickly through the processes outlined in this policy;
- Our staff avoid situations in which they are likely to be alone and isolated with a young person, even if the member of staff has had an enhanced DBS check;
- We never take photographs or record young persons without the written permission of their parents, themselves if over 16, or an appropriate senior staff representative;
- Our staff will always check SOAS toilets before children under the age of 18 who are in our care use them. Where facilities allow, staff members will use separate toilets to under-18s
- Emergency contact details for parents/guardians are an essential requirement for any young person who attends outreach activities delivered by the AES team at the university campus independently of their parents/guardians or school/college.
- Safeguarding will be included in all risk assessments that are created for outreach interventions and student recruitment activities. These assessments will include risks associated with safeguarding and the lead person completing it from the AES/UKSR team will commit to reading this policy as part of their responsibilities

within it. Risk assessments will be shared with visiting schools and colleges on request.

- Our staff never give out personal details such as a telephone number or email address. Always give an official university email address, phone number or postal address;
- We will always inform the organiser of the event and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) if there is concern about the behaviour of a colleague or the welfare of a young person;

2.2. Screening (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS))

To ensure that only suitable staff within the AES and UKSR teams are employed to work with young people, SOAS will commit to the following:

- All AES/UKSR staff (including Student Ambassadors) that engage in outreach and student recruitment activity will complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which includes Children's Barred List Check. The exception to this is Student Ambassadors contracted to support large scale events (For events where there are large numbers DBS checked staff available e.g. teachers) not all Student Ambassadors require a DBS check, but it must be possible clearly identify those Student Ambassadors who are DBS checked and those who are not. This is to ensure only DBS checked Student Ambassadors complete certain tasks (bathroom trips for example);
- Any AES/UKSR staff or student ambassador who have been convicted of an offence that is related to the safeguarding of young people will not be allowed to deliver or support outreach work in schools, colleges or community settings. This will be achieved through thorough screening, using an enhanced DBS check;
- AES/UKSR staff and student ambassadors are responsible for informing the University immediately, if there is any change in their circumstances which could affect their clearance. A DBS check will be undertaken every 3 years.
- Any AES/UKSR staff that have a criminal record will be assessed by senior staff, in conjunction with HR, to consider the nature of their conviction and make a decision about their suitability to work in outreach;
- All AES/UKSR staff that engage in outreach and student recruitment work will complete safeguarding training every two years and receive a certificate of completion;
- Any staff from the wider SOAS community who support the AES/UKSR team in delivering outreach and student recruitment activities will adhere to this policy and be DBS checked and trained. In some instances this may not be deemed necessary due to the nature of their involvement in the activities, in which case they will never be unaccompanied with young people or allow for this to happen themselves. If these staff are visiting a school or college it will be at the host institution's agreement and in adherence to their safeguarding practices.

2.3. Safeguarding for online/digital outreach

The safeguarding of prospective students who engage with online outreach needs specific considerations to ensure their safety is protected, which are:

- Online engagement and learning delivered by the AES/UKSR team will only be delivered through platforms that ensure students' personal details will not be shown to other participants. It will be the role of hosting members of staff to ensure that the personal details of students engaging with digital/online interaction cannot be accessed by other participants.
- Where a digital/online interaction is agreed, and set up by a school, the AES/UKSR team will inform the school that the platform being used must meet safeguarding standards and that they have parental consent for student to engage in digital/online learning.
- Two members of staff must be in attendance for any interaction delivered online. Where break out rooms are being used in digital/online interactions, two members of staff will be deployed in each room to safeguard prospective students.
- Students will be made aware of the process to report risks or concerns to the AES/UKSR e-mail address.
- Online safeguarding guidance will be shared with all students and external staff in advance of them engaging in online outreach work. The guide details how students can access and join online sessions safely, including advice on not sharing personal information, how to join sessions anonymously, and how to use the chat/Q&A functions safely and correctly.

2.4. Risk Assessment

- 2.5. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any activity with children or adults at risk. The risk assessment should be undertaken by the relevant member of staff responsible for the event/activity. Any issues of concern surfaced through the risk assessment process should be raised with the Head of Access, Experience and Success.

3. Training

- 3.1. Training will be completed for all staff who come in to contact with young people through outreach activities and will involve:
- Safeguarding training;
 - Equality and Diversity training;
- 3.2. Training is made available to staff annually if they desire a refresher, otherwise staff are required to undertake refresher training every two years.

4. Designated Safeguarding Officers/Leads

- 4.1. The following members of staff have been trained as local (AES) Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs), and will give advice and guidance on matters relating to young people that engage in outreach (pre-entry) activity.

Lead Designated Safeguarding Officers within AES:

- Victoria Edwards (Head of Access, Experience and Success)

The Lead Safeguarding Officer for students at SOAS will also act as a key point of contact:

- Mike Chung (Head Student Advice and Wellbeing)

5. Disclosures

- 5.1. This section outlines the protocols that are in place to guide the actions of staff in the event that either a young person makes a complaint of abuse by a member of SOAS staff or that they disclose other instances of being abused or neglected, outside of the outreach situation:
- 5.2. If staff have concerns about colleagues involved in activities with young people they should follow the procedures in the Report and Support Section of the University Website
- 5.3. If a young person makes a disclosure of abuse, staff will:
- Reassure them and take them seriously;
 - Tell them that they cannot keep it confidential and must tell the Designated Safeguarding Officer;
 - Listen carefully, record (afterwards) everything that is said;
 - Not “interview” or interrupt the young person or ask them to elaborate on anything when they are recalling significant events;
 - Remember that they have a duty to report and not to investigate allegations or disclosures;
 - Not repeat the allegation or information about the incident to anyone other than the DSO;
 - Once the DSL is made aware of a concern, they will undertake an assessment to determine whether the concern is taken to the relevant authority. If a referral is determined to be necessary, the DSL will inform the relevant authority, which may include the Local Authority Designated Officer, Children’s Social Care, Police or the Independent Safeguarding Authority;
 - If a disclosure happens within a school or college we will also follow the safeguarding policies of the host institution.
- 5.4. SOAS expects all staff, students and contractors to be alert to any concerns about young people and to report any such concerns they may have, however apparently trivial, to a DSO.
- 5.5. The full reporting procedures can be found within the *SOAS Safeguarding Policy*.