

Safeguarding

Community

Handbook



UWC RED CROSS  
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## PURPOSE, SCOPE AND SAFEGUARDING

RCN, like all United World Colleges, makes safeguarding a priority in our community. We are committed to safeguarding all members of our community through both prevention and intervention. RCN expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to express any concern they may have with regard to the conduct of individuals on campus. RCN is committed to openness, integrity and accountability.

Below is a reduced version of our safeguarding handbook. The full handbook is an in-school working document that gives detailed information of all safeguarding procedures and policies to help protect our community. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the safeguarding team.

### What is Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the process of protecting individuals from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation, and promoting their welfare. It involves creating a safe environment where members of the community can grow and develop, free from harm or risk of harm. This approach includes a wider range of concerns than the more limited approach of child protection, which is a specific type of safeguarding that focuses on protecting children from abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding can include a wide range of concerns, which may vary depending on the specific context and the individuals involved. However, some common concerns that fall under the umbrella of safeguarding include:

- Abuse (Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Neglect)
- Exploitation
- Radicalization
- Bullying
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health Concerns
- Any situation where the young person poses a serious threat to the safety and/or wellbeing of themselves or others

### RCN SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The purpose of the Safeguarding Team is to engage a collective responsibility for safeguarding. The current individuals comprise the Safeguarding Team:

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Sarah Haughey, Community Life Leader and House Leader of Iceland House  
[sarah.haughey@uwrcrn.no](mailto:sarah.haughey@uwrcrn.no)

#### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Charlotte Willemoes, Head of Wellbeing  
[charlotte.willemoes@uwrcrn.no](mailto:charlotte.willemoes@uwrcrn.no)

UWC International Office Safeguarding Lead: Radha Pillay  
[radha.pillay@uwcio.uwc.org](mailto:radha.pillay@uwcio.uwc.org)

UWC Designated Board Member for Safeguarding: Jens Petersen  
[jp@korinth.nu](mailto:jp@korinth.nu)

## HOW RCN COMMUNICATES ABOUT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Any safeguarding issue is very personal and emotional for everyone involved. RCN strives to ensure the highest level of confidentiality and will follow a clear set of priorities:

1. Protect and support the alleged victim
2. Ensure no one else is in harm's way
3. Ensure a fair process for the alleged perpetrator
4. Notify the relevant agency and/or law enforcement as necessary

The first priority is protecting the alleged victim/s and respecting their privacy while also working diligently to determine if there are other victims. At the same time, RCN must ensure a fair process for the alleged perpetrator. Particularly, we must be within the Norwegian legal requirements while reporting to the designated authorities where necessary. It is important that time be allowed for a complete and full investigation of any reported incident. Where the investigation is handled by the police, RCN will cease their own internal investigation to allow for clarity of process.



## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

The term *visitors* refers to suppliers, contractors, workers, and individuals or groups who use the school premises for any activities. RCN staff are not considered visitors, as they are identifiable through familiarity as well as on W4. Specific guidance provided for visitors on campus includes the following:

- Pre-arranged visitors should be registered on W4, along with details of their purpose in visiting and who their on-campus contact person will be.
- Visitors are not allowed to socialize with the students unless they are entering the school in a capacity where this is expected (eg. an educational visitor). In this case the expectations around safeguarding apply to them in the same way as to a member of staff and they will be asked to read the Visitor Safeguarding Guidelines and sign a declaration saying that they have read, understand and agree to abide by the guidance.
- Visitors should not take any contact details of any students without consent from a member of the Safeguarding Team. This includes, but is not limited to phone number, e-mail, social media, etc.
- Visitors must not take any photos of students unless given explicit prior permission by a member of the Leadership Team and the individual student.
- Visitors may not bring onto campus any weapons, alcohol, drugs or other illegal items onto campus.

## SPEAK UP: DUTY TO REPORT

### *What should you do if you have a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a member of the community?*

The duty to report applies to any staff, student or visitor and enables anyone to raise concerns within the college rather than overlook a problem. In such cases, staff and students should follow the RCN Safeguarding Procedures.

All members of the community are well placed to observe and report outward signs of abuse, in particular. Care must be taken as such signs can be cause for suspicion and are not, in themselves, proof that abuse has, or is, taking place.

Training will be provided to all staff on the signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to report and seek support.



All staff, students and visitors are able to report any concerns directly to the Safeguarding Team via our online reporting system Safeguarding24. Signs with instructions, as well as a direct access QR Code are displayed across campus, including study areas, classrooms, bathrooms and the students houses to enable confidential and easy access.

## IN SCHOOL FOLLOW-UP AFTER IDENTIFICATION

These steps should be followed after identification of a safeguarding concern:

1. Staff, visitors and volunteers must report suspected abuse immediately to the DSL or DDSL, who are required to inform the Rektor.
2. If an adult member of the community receives a disclosure of a concern from a student, they must immediately report it to the DSL or a DDSL.
3. If the DSL or DDSL feels that a suspected physical abuse situation exists they will notify the school nurse, who will interview and examine the student.

## UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

If a member of the community raises a concern in good faith that is not confirmed by an investigation, no prejudice or action will be taken. If a concern is raised maliciously, disciplinary action may result.

## WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

RCN expects all community members, volunteers or visitors to express any concerns they may have with regard to the conduct of any individual/s on campus.

RCN is committed to openness, integrity and accountability. All persons who are a part of the RCN community should feel safe and supported to express their concerns. The aims of the whistle-blowing policy are:



- Encourage community members to feel comfortable raising concerns about safeguarding
- Provide a process by which concerns can be raised
- Provide a means of support for staff where concerns have been raised

The policy is designed to address concerns that staff have about the conduct of individuals in a position of trust within the organization. If such conduct could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of our students and if, for whatever reason, staff feel unable to raise these concerns. These could include:

- Unprofessional behavior
- Bullying or perceived bullying by staff
- Personal contact with students that is contrary to RCN's Safeguarding Policy
- Inappropriate sexualized behavior or language
- Knowledge about an individual's personal circumstances that indicate they could be a risk to young people or unsuitable to work in an educational setting.

*Please note that these are examples and not an exhaustive list.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns will be treated in confidence. There could, however, be a need for whistle-blowers to give evidence if a crime has been witnessed or in regard to disciplinary procedures, if that is the outcome. Anonymous allegations are also investigated as thoroughly as possible, though one aim of this policy is to encourage all staff who raise concerns to be identified as part of their professional responsibility.

## PROCESS FOR RAISING A CONCERN

Under standard procedures, concerns about an adult working with young people would normally be raised through the RCN Safeguarding process, by informing the DSL or Rektor. If the DSL or Rektor are the subject of the concern, or if staff feel that following the standard reporting procedures would jeopardize their position at RCN, the whistle-blowing policy can be implemented. Staff can report their concerns directly to the Safeguarding Board Representative.

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF ABUSE

### HOW ARE ABUSE AND NEGLECT DEFINED?

Definitions and understandings of abuse are complex and can be different across cultures according to child raising behaviors, gender role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of relationships used to meet the needs of the more powerful person, typically a member of the family, a teacher or a peer. Research guides many of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors. If you have any questions about the following information please do not hesitate to contact the DSL for more information.

Terminology	Definition	Signs
Physical Abuse	Causing intentional physical harm, which can include:  Hitting, biting, pushing, fighting, strangling, slapping and other acts that cause pain and bodily harm  Creating substantial risk of physical harm to a person and their bodily functioning  Committing acts that are cruel and inhumane regardless of observable injury. These can include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline, demonstrating a disregard for a person's pain and/or mental suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excuses for their origin don't match the injury</li><li>• Lack of needed medical attention</li><li>• Chronic stomach pains or UTI's</li><li>• Covering up body even in hot weather</li><li>• Refusal to discuss injuries</li><li>• Fear of parents being contacted regarding injuries</li><li>• Self destructive tendencies, such as self harm\cutting</li><li>• Chronic running away</li><li>• Aggressive behavior towards others</li></ul>

Emotional Abuse	The persistent emotional ill treatment of a person so as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed</li> <li>• Highly anxious\low self esteem</li> <li>• Sudden appearance of speech disorder\underachievement</li> <li>• Fear of new situations</li> <li>• Compulsions\obsessions\phobia</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations</li> <li>• Extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>• Drug or alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Chronic running away</li> <li>• Lying</li> </ul>
Neglect	<p>The persistent failure to meet basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development</p> <p>Physical neglect- not providing for physical needs such as food, water, shelter</p> <p>Emotional neglect- not providing basic love and care which results in emotional distress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic needs are unattended such as dress, hygiene, nutrition or attendance</li> <li>• Fatigue or listlessness</li> <li>• Self-destructive behaviors</li> <li>• Extreme loneliness- and an inability to connect with peers</li> <li>• Extreme need for affection</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing</li> </ul>

	Educational neglect- not providing supervision, access to education or appropriate awareness of educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug or alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Excessive absences</li> <li>• Not responding to communication</li> </ul>
Sexual Abuse	<p>Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities</p> <p>Sexual exploitation: Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power or trust for sexual purposes including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain or irritation in the genital area\stomach when walking or sitting</li> <li>• UTI's or other unexplainable injuries</li> <li>• Fear of people or places</li> <li>• Regressive behavior</li> <li>• Age-inappropriate sexual discussion or provocative behavior</li> <li>• STI's</li> <li>• Being unusually withdrawn or quiet, or unusually aggressive</li> <li>• Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult or peer</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “secret” friendship with an adult or peer</li> </ul>
Self-Harm	<p>Intentional, direct injury of body tissue without suicidal intent. Includes but is not limited to cutting, scratching, burning, carving words or symbols on the skin, picking fights, eating disorders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained cuts, burns, injuries, scars</li> <li>• Wearing long sleeves and long pants</li> <li>• in hot weather</li> <li>• Depression, anxiety, instability</li> <li>• Statements of helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness</li> </ul>
Eating Disorders	<p>Include sextreme emotions, attitudes and behaviors surrounding weight and food issues. They can result in serious physical and mental health concerns with life-threatening consequences. The two most common types are these:</p> <p>Anorexia Nervosa, which entails deliberate self starvation and refusal to maintain body weight at or above normal weight, intense fear of gaining weight, distorted perception of one’s body, absence of at least three consecutive periods (female).</p> <p>Bulimia Nervosa, which includes recurrent episodes of binge eating usually followed by self-induced vomiting or some form or purging as a means of controlling weight. (e.g. vomiting, laxatives, diuretics, fasting, excessive exercise)</p>	<p>Physical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden weight loss, gain or fluctuation in a short period of time</li> <li>• Feeling faint or dizzy</li> <li>• Sensitive to temperature, feeling cold</li> <li>• Blue hands\feet</li> <li>• Dry hair or skin</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> <li>• Fine body hair over face</li> <li>• Abdominal Pains</li> <li>• Loss of hair on head</li> <li>• Decreased concentration</li> </ul> <p>Emotional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in attitude\performance</li> <li>• Mood affected by thoughts or appearance</li> <li>• Constant comparison to others</li> <li>• Refers to self as fat, gross, ugly</li> <li>• Appears sad, depressed or anxious</li> <li>• Expresses feelings of worthlessness</li> <li>• Obsessed with maintaining low weight</li> </ul> <p>Behavioral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretends to eat, then throws food away\skips meals</li> <li>• Exercises for long periods</li> <li>• Makes frequent trips to the bathroom</li> <li>• Fatigues easily</li> <li>• Avoids Kantina</li> <li>• Wears baggy clothes and\or many layers</li> <li>• Increased isolation, irritability and impatience</li> <li>• Secretive eating habits</li> </ul>



Suicidal Ideation	Thoughts about how to kill ones self, concerns or preoccupation with suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks about death or suicide</li> <li>Statements of helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness</li> <li>• Loss of interest</li> <li>• Giving away one's possessions</li> <li>Losing interest in things they used to care about</li> <li>• Visiting, calling people to say goodbye</li> </ul>
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The signs and symptoms listed here are not exhaustive lists. It is also important that if some signs are visible it does not necessarily mean that there is abuse or a safeguarding concern. Any concerns or worries should be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately, or reported through Safeguarding 24.

## PEER ON PEER ABUSE

Students are more likely to face peer to peer abuse than they are adult to student abuse. Peer abuse includes, bullying, prejudice-based harm, physical violence, sexual harassment and violence, dating violence, hazing violence and radicalization.

Terminology	Definition
Bullying	Discussed in detail below.
Dating Violence	The perpetration or threat of an act of violence by at least one member of a couple on the other member in the context of dating.
Hazing Violence	Any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group of team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.
Physical Violence	When a person hurts or tries to hurt another by hitting, kicking or using another type of physical force.
Prejudice-Based Harm	An offense perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived disability, race, religion or gender identity.
Radicalization	A phased and complex process in which an individual or a group embraces a radical ideology or belief that accepts, uses or condones violence, including acts of terrorism, to reach a specific political or ideological purpose.
Sexual Harassment and Violence	Any unwanted sexual act or activity where consent has not been clearly given. This may include but is not limited to rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment. It can also be psychological and/or physical.
<b>Signs</b>	<p>These signs have been taken from the Farrer Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit: <a href="https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit/">https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/peer-on-peer-abuse-toolkit/</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standards ordinarily expected</li> <li>• Physical injuries</li> <li>• Experiencing persistent difficulties with mental health and/or emotional well being</li> <li>• Becoming withdrawn and/or shy</li> <li>• Experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks</li> <li>• Suffering from nightmares, lack of sleep or sleeping too much</li> <li>• Broader changes in behavior, including alcohol or substance misuse</li> <li>• Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in ways not appropriate for their age, cultural background or observable past behavior</li> <li>• Abusive behavior towards others</li> </ul> <p>Exhibiting these signs does not necessarily indicate that a person is experiencing peer on peer abuse. However, behaviors still need to be reported.</p>	

## BULLYING

Bullying is ongoing direct or indirect physical or psychological intimidation that typically occurs to create a pattern of harassment and abuse.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using digital devices such as computers, tablets, phones, etc. Cyberbullying most commonly occurs in:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

Types of Bullying	Direct Examples	Indirect examples
Verbal Abuse	Verbal insults Racial/ethnic insults Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persuading others to criticize or insult someone</li> <li>• Spreading malicious or untrue rumors</li> <li>• Anonymous phone calls, emails or text messages</li> <li>• Threatening words and obscene gestures</li> </ul>
Social Emotional Bullying	Using guilt: "You won't be my friend if..." Manipulation Being unfriendly Forming tight groups/cliques against someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberately turning away or averting one's gaze to ignore someone</li> <li>• Rolling eyes</li> <li>• Persuading people to exclude someone</li> <li>• "Canceling" someone</li> <li>• Persuading another person to assault someone</li> </ul>
Physical Bullying	Striking or hitting Throwing objects, using objects as weapons Removing and hiding belongings Making statements, threats, or revealing information about a person through social media, texts, etc.	
Online Bullying	Setting up fake accounts to spread negative information  Misrepresenting yourself in order to give inaccurate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying to upset people through indirect comments</li> <li>• Excluding people from online groups or chats</li> </ul>

Safeguarding concerns around peer on peer abuse and bullying follow the same reporting procedure as adult on student abuse and disclosures would be handled in the same way as well.

## HANDLING A DISCLOSURE

Students can disclose abuse or other safeguarding concerns at any time, while it is ongoing, immediately after, or years later. Many people do not disclose abuse during childhood and adolescence for fear of the consequences or fear they won't be believed. The initial, informal disclosure is important and may help with trust and any future investigation. Once a student has disclosed to one adult, they are more likely to cooperate with other adults and the investigation. In short, you want to receive what is being said; reassure the person as far as honesty and reliability permit; react by listening and following the guidelines below; record notes in as much detail as you can after the disclosure focusing on the student's statements and observable things; report to the DSL or a DDSL.

Do's	Don'ts
Respect the enormity of what the young person is sharing with you	Don't stop the young person from talking
Listen and show care	Don't act scared or shocked
Ask open-ended questions Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner Say, "I'm glad you told me" Be patient and do not rush the student	Don't ask leading or yes/no type questions or interview others Things NOT to say: No, I'm sure you misunderstood I won't tell anyone else Why? How? When? Where? Who? Don't doubt what they are saying Don't promise that everything will be ok
Write down what you've heard in the student's own words, where possible Note what you have seen and heard - and make certain you distinguish between what the student says and your inferences Tell the student what you'll do next	Don't seek help while the young person is talking to you, although you can explain that you need to invite the DSL or DDSL to come and join the conversation if you feel you need immediate support.
Speak with the DSL or a DDSL	Don't make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the alleged behavior

## ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT

The College strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. Bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, is not acceptable and will be dealt with expeditiously. Procedures and consequences are outlined in the RCN Safeguarding Handbook.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

Harassment and bullying are serious actions that threaten the safety of our community. All reported acts of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. The College expects all members of the school community to report incidences of bullying. Students should be able to trust and confide in any member of staff,, who in turn can help the student report the matter.

The College understands that students are often afraid to report and will implement protective measures. The identity of the student who reports the incident of bullying will be protected during follow-up.

## PROCEDURES

Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, responses may include counseling, parent and national committee involvement and a full range of possible consequences including expulsion. In some cases, the college may be required to alert the proper legal authorities about the incident. For the purpose of this handbook, bullying and harassment do not include:

- the legitimate exercise of an individual's supervisory or instructional authority
- the expression of complaints, whether orally or in writing, if communicated in a manner consistent with the intent of the guidelines above
- naturally occurring, occasional conflict, which is an inevitable part of social interaction

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

### *Student Responsibilities*

- Take action if you witness bullying (tell the bully to stop, change the subject, get help)
- Tell a member of staff
- Be a positive role model
- Be aware of the anti-bullying statement and help promote it.
- Notify the DSL or a DDSL who will document the incidents and follow up



### *Staff Responsibilities*

- Take reports of bullying seriously and give feedback to students on what they plan to do. Be aware of signs and symptoms of bullying and take action.
- Notify the DSL or a DDSL who will document the incidents and follow up.
- Complete required training in safeguarding

### *School Leadership Responsibilities*

- Provide relevant professional development for staff in the area of safeguarding
- Create opportunities for staff and students to attend workshops or informational sessions
- Monitor incidents and initiate consequences
- Review policies and procedures annually to ensure they are up to date and relevant

## **RECRUITING**

Safeguarding is an essential part of the recruiting process at RCN, where young people are entrusted to the care of adults in a residential setting. Our recruiting process includes:

- **References:** RCN will request references from previous employers, which will be used to gain insight into the individual's past work experience and their interactions with young people.
- **Interviews:** During the recruitment process, RCN will conduct interviews with candidates to assess their suitability for working with young people. These interviews will always include questions about safeguarding.
- **Training:** Once employed, staff members will be required to undergo training on safeguarding policies and procedures, including how to recognize signs of abuse or neglect, how to report concerns, and how to work with young people in a safe and appropriate manner. All family members over the age of 18 who live within the student village are required to complete a basic training in safeguarding, as well as having read the Safeguarding Community Handbook.

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**Policies and procedures:** RCN has clear policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding, which will be communicated to all staff members. This may include guidance on how to respond to concerns, how to maintain appropriate boundaries with young people, and how to work collaboratively with other professionals involved in safeguarding.

Safeguarding24: Our online platform for instantly reaching out to your Safeguarding Team when you feel worried or unsafe.

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

**Step 1:** Scan the QR Code

**Step 2:** Login with your RCN Email

**Step 3:** Use the drop down list of options, and add any extra explanation that you would like to add.

**Step 4:** A member of the SG Team will respond within 24 hours.



No one will see this report except for Sarah and Lottie, and there will be no record on your phone of sending the message.

### CATEGORIES FOR REPORTING

**Discrimination:** Have you or someone else experienced unfair treatment or prejudice based on characteristics such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic?

**Sexual Misconduct:** Have you or someone else experienced any inappropriate sexual behavior, including harassment, assault, or coercion? If you have not given clear and enthusiastic consent, and/or you feel are feeling distressed about what happened reach out.

**Physical Safety:** Is there risk of harm, injury, or danger to yourself or someone else?

**Psychological or Mental Health:** Are you or someone else feeling consistently sad, anxious, or overwhelmed? Are you or someone else having thoughts of self-harm or suicide? Are you or someone else struggling with feelings of depression?

**Bullying:** Have you or someone else experienced repeated and intentionally harm from another person which makes you feel intimidated or excluded? Remember that harm can be physical, verbal, emotional and can be in person or online.

**Report an Accident:** Has someone hurt themselves, for example hitting their head?

**Abusive Language:** Have you or someone else experienced hurtful, offensive, or disrespectful words or phrases?

**I need to talk:** You can talk about anything and everything with a member of the SG Team

**Other:** Is there anything else you want to report and ask for help with?

If you need immediate assistance phone the 24 hour duty phone on +47 90930958