

## Imperial College Union Policy Safeguarding Policy

Audience: All Staff  
Owner(s): Leadership Group  
Created Date: April 2021  
Review Date: April 2024  
Date Approved:  
Approving body:

### 1. Policy statement

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its members, staff, customers, suppliers, visitors and all others who may be affected by its activities.

Imperial College Union recognises that good management of health, safety and welfare is essential to the success of the organisation and is a sign of a well-managed organisation.

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place to identify hazards, assess risk and set objectives to improve the management of health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union acknowledges its duty to ensure that all relevant legislation regarding health, safety and welfare is adhered to and that resources are made available to ensure health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union is committed to developing a positive safety culture, based on the involvement of staff and volunteers in health and safety management. Imperial College Union will therefore use consultative forums and mechanisms to involve staff and volunteers in health and safety management, and will endeavour to provide relevant training to all staff and students.

Imperial College Union commits to reviewing this policy at least every 2 years, or as and when necessary, with approval for the policy to take place at the Board of Trustees.

### 2. Introduction

Imperial College Union is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all members and visitors but in particular for children and vulnerable adults including those with mental health difficulties.

This policy sets out arrangements for securing the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults on Union premises or who engage in activities that are controlled by the Union. It sets out the steps that the Union will take to ensure that concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's wellbeing or risk of harm or abuse to them arising from activities connected with the College can be addressed quickly and appropriately.

### 3. Responsibilities

#### Board of Trustees

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on organisations to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of its employees at work

and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g., membership, volunteers, members of the public.

The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of the Union, has overall and final responsibility for Health and Safety matters within the Union and for ensuring that Health and Safety legislation is complied with.

### **The Managing Director**

The Managing Director has delegated responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Policy and associated policies. As required by the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1993' the Managing Director is named as the 'competent person' who will ensure compliance with Health and Safety. In particular the MD is responsible for:

- The setting of Health and Safety standards and objectives.
- The allocation of the necessary financial resources.
- Identifying and allocating Health and Safety responsibilities to Senior Managers / Departmental Heads.

### **Leadership Team Lead**

The Managing Director will delegate to a membership of the leadership team the following responsibility:

- Ensuring general risk assessments are undertaken and made available to all employees.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of Health and Safety activities and the Union's Health and Safety Policy and associated policies and procedures, and for ensuring that, at the strategic level, performance standards and timescales are adhered to.
- Ensuring accidents are investigated and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- Putting in place arrangements to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment.
- Chairing the Students' Union's Operational Health and Safety Committee and ensuring it has the time, facilities and resources to carry out its business effectively.
- Keeping under review this Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety performance of the Union.

### **Line Managers**

Health and Safety is a delegated line management responsibility requiring managers to undertake operational Health and Safety duties identified in this Policy and individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety. All Departmental Heads will be trained in relevant Health & Safety courses (i.e., Risk Assessment, COSHH) and where appropriate (CIEH, NEBOSH) to ensure areas/ teams are managed safely.

Line Managers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that departmental activities are conducted in accordance with Union policy, legislative, and other formal standards and that those hazards having the potential to cause harm are risk assessed and identified controls are implemented.
- Ensuring that employees receive sufficient information, training and supervision on Health and Safety matters.
- Producing safe systems of work and the means for complying with this Policy and other individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety.
- Where necessary, organising supervision to control the working environment and the maintenance of safe standards.
- Investigating accidents, or near misses, to establish causes and prevent recurrence.

- The Health and Safety induction of new staff, volunteers and students and ensuring that information, instruction and training are provided to meet individually identified needs.
- Identifying and monitoring the adequacy of the specific Health and Safety responsibilities of staff and students.
- Reviewing the above arrangements at regular intervals, making adjustments as necessary.

### **Individual Members of Staff, Volunteers, Students and Visitors**

ICU expects all its staff and members to act in an exemplary manner towards children and vulnerable adults and to ensure that their behaviour does not lead to concerns about their integrity and moral standing or to allegations of harm or abuse.

The following guidance is not intended to present an exhaustive list but sets out general expectations of behaviour in terms of what ICU would regard as appropriate behaviour:

- Treat children and vulnerable adults fairly, equally and respectfully and should not show favouritism or disfavour;
- Be sensitive to the child or vulnerable adult's appearance, race, culture, religious belief, sexuality, gender or disability;
- Act as a good role model and challenge any unacceptable behaviour from others;
- Report allegations or suspicions of harm or abuse of children or vulnerable adults;
- Work, where possible, in an open environment with children and vulnerable adults so that others can clearly observe and hear you;
- Be aware that physical contact and speaking, acting or jesting in certain ways with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted;
- Avoid physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult unless it is reasonably necessary for health and safety or their wellbeing;
- Respect the right to privacy of a child or vulnerable adult and do not enter any private room occupied by of a child or vulnerable adult alone unless necessitated by an emergency;
- Avoid unaccompanied journeys in a vehicle with a child or vulnerable adult.

All staff are required to notify the Managing Director if they are the subject of an investigation by the police or other safeguarding agency into an allegation of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff failing to disclose this information.

All staff are required to notify the Managing Director if they receive a police caution or conviction for a criminal offence. Disciplinary action may be taken against staff failing to disclose this information.

Members of staff with responsibility for activities at ICU or run by ICU which involve children or vulnerable adults must ensure that they conduct a risk assessment of the activities involved and take appropriate steps to protect the welfare of the children or vulnerable adults involved.

Members of staff with responsibility for activities at ICU or run by ICU which involve children or vulnerable adults must ensure that appropriate training, information and support is provided and available to members of ICU clubs and societies. All clubs and societies delivering activities with children or vulnerable adults must complete safeguarding training.

Members of staff with responsibility for activities at ICU or run by ICU which involve children or vulnerable adults must confirm with the Head of Student Experience that ICU has appropriate insurances in place to indemnify the proposed activity.

It is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with someone who is subject to this trust and is under the age of 18 years. ICU would also consider this to be a disciplinary issue.

### **Operational Health and Safety Committee**

The Operational Health and Safety Committee will meet at least once per term, although additional meetings may be called by the Managing Director, Officer Trustees, or the Board of Trustees should the need arise. Membership of the committee will be determined by the Managing Director.

The Committee will have the following terms of reference:

- To maintain and review the measures necessary to ensure the Health and Safety of Union employees, students and others engaged in legitimate activities on its premises.
- To set and review H&S performance and objectives to improve H&S management and maintain a positive H&S culture.
- To monitor the management processes employed within the Union to mitigate risk, notably the implementation and annual review of risk assessments.
- To monitor and review H&S related incidents, implement investigations and complete corrective action (where appropriate and necessary) in a timely manner not to exceed 6 months.
- To monitor and review the H&S audit and inspection process, both internal and external, and implement recommendations where appropriate.
- To monitor and review the adequacy and implementation of H&S related training, awareness and competency standards.
- To enable complaints and reports from employees to be investigated, remedial action to be implemented, and response provided.
- To submit an annual report to the Board of Trustees summarizing the committee's output and effectiveness.

In addition to the Operational Health and Safety Committee, the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine the need for a sub group of the Board to take on specific governance oversight of the Union's Health and Safety activity to ensure sufficient scrutiny and consideration is given to this area of work.

## **4. Arrangements**

The Union has specific legal responsibilities to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded against the risk of harm and abuse.

The Union recognises that abuse or harm or the risk of abuse or harm to a child or vulnerable adult may take many different forms and that individuals may have different perceptions of what constitutes harm or abuse. The Union regards harm or abuse as including any physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect, bullying, harassment or intimidation.

It is not the responsibility of the Union to investigate harm or abuse. However, it has a duty of care to act if there is cause for concern, to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and to notify the appropriate agencies about any concerns so that they can investigate.

### **Recruitment and Employment of Staff**

It is illegal for an organisation to knowingly allow a person barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to work in regulated activity. The Union will therefore:

- Require applicants for employment to declare any unspent criminal convictions on application forms for employment.
- Require persons appointed to regulated or controlled posts to undertake standard or enhanced DBS checks or, if they are from overseas, will seek a 'Certificate of Good Character' from their country of origin.
- Exercise its legal right to require existing employees occupying regulated posts or undertaking regulated work to reveal their full criminal history, including any spent convictions and/or undertake standard or enhanced DBS checks. ICU may exercise this right as an annual requirement for certain roles.

The Union recognises the need to take a proportionate approach to personal and DBS disclosures and will treat all such information in the strictest confidence. The Union will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of such information.

Interview panels will ensure that a fair and measured discussion of any offences takes place either at the interview or is subsequently arranged. Guidance on the conduct of this discussion should be sought from the Managing Director. Guidance should also be sought from College HR prior to any offer of employment being made.

If a subsequent DBS check shows a conviction or caution or contains other information in relation to a potential or existing employee then the relevant line manager, senior manager and the Managing Director will decide whether this is sufficiently serious to constitute an impediment to their employment by the Union.

In making such a decision the Union will take account of factors such as the nature of the conviction or information, time elapsed and whether this indicates a pattern of behaviour that may place children or vulnerable adults at risk. The line manager will retain a confidential written record of this decision.

If the relevant line manager, senior manager and the Managing Director conclude that a DBS check includes convictions or other information that indicates that children or vulnerable adults might be put at risk, the Union Safeguarding Panel will be convened. This will meet with the individual concerned, reach a conclusion on the evidence and will recommend a course of action.

The Union safeguarding panel will consist of; The Managing Director, a Senior Manager, The Deputy President Welfare and an appointed external trustee.

If the Union dismisses or removes someone from regulated activity (or would have done had they not already left its employment) because they have abused or harmed children or vulnerable adults then the Union has a legal responsibility to report the person concerned to the DBS. This responsibility will normally be undertaken by the relevant line manager in consultation with the Managing Director.

## **Reporting Suspicions, Allegations Or Actual Incidents**

The welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must be paramount. Members of staff have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents, regardless of whether the information has been disclosed in confidence to them or if they remain unsure of their suspicions. Staff who fail to discharge this responsibility may be liable to disciplinary action.

Staff must not attempt to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident themselves but must report it through the channels outlined below. All suspicions and allegations will be taken seriously and will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.

As far as possible, the confidentiality of all individuals involved in any allegation, investigation or resulting disciplinary proceedings will be respected by the Union. However, there may be circumstances in which it is necessary for the Union to share information with parties such as social services, the police and the parents, guardians or carers of the child or vulnerable adult concerned.

Information may also need to be disclosed if there is a public interest imperative. The Union cannot therefore guarantee that the confidentiality of any disclosures can be maintained in all circumstances.

In the event of any suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse committed by a member of Union staff, the matter should be reported to the most Senior Member of staff on duty at that time. Outside normal working hours, reports should be made referring to Union emergency reporting procedure.

On being notified of any suspicion, allegation or apparent abuse involving Union staff, the Managing Director (or their alternate) shall:

- Take such steps they consider necessary to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other child or vulnerable adult who might be at risk;
- Liaise with the person who reported the original concern and ensure that a report of the incident(s) is completed;
- Consult with the relevant line manager if deemed appropriate or advice is required;
- Report the matter to the local social services;
- Notify the College Director of Student Services or, in their absence, their designated alternate.

If the Managing Director is the subject of the suspicion, allegation or the claim of apparent abuse then this must be reported to the Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee.

Any notification of suspicion, allegation or evidence of abuse or harm may result in the Managing Director or their nominee taking the decision to suspend the member of staff concerned under the ICU/College "Disciplinary Procedure" whilst investigations proceed. Suspension in this context is not a disciplinary measure and implies no assumption of guilt.

The Union may refer a member of staff to the relevant professional body if there are concerns over their suitability to practice and/or remain on the professional register or equivalent. The Managing Director will normally make this referral on behalf of the Union.

Staff with concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult with whom they come into contact with on an external visit should follow the procedure in place at the organisation they are visiting. If, for whatever reasons, the member of staff feels that this is inappropriate then they must refer their concerns to their line manager who will contact the appropriate agency.

There may be instances when a member of staff receives information in the course of their normal duties about allegations of abuse towards a child or vulnerable adult that are unconnected with the activities of the Union or the use of its premises. In such instances, staff must exercise a duty of care and should either encourage the informant to report the matter to the appropriate agencies or, if they remain concerned, make a report themselves.

If, for whatever reasons, a member of staff in receipt of an allegation feels that it is inappropriate for them to make the report then they must refer their concerns to their line manager who will contact the appropriate agency.

## **5. Review**

The Policy Owner is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of their policies at a minimum of every 3 years or as required to stay current with applicable laws and/or Imperial College Policies.

The purpose of the review is to determine:

- if the policy is still necessary and accurate;
- if the policy should be combined with another policy or if it should be rescinded;
- if the policy is up to date with current laws and regulations and Imperial College policies;
- if changes are required to improve the effectiveness or clarity of the policy;

## **6. Training**

Health and safety legislation requires employers to provide adequate health and safety training. The College provides a comprehensive training programme that is available to all staff and postgraduate students, mostly without charge. Undergraduate training is dealt with in departments.

### **Staff Training**

All Union employees are required to undertake essential training related to their role as part of their induction.

All supervisors and line managers will be provided with additional training to undertake their role effectively.

### **Student Volunteers**

Student volunteers will be provided with relevant health and safety training to ensure their activity is safe and that they are aware of their responsibility with regards to safeguarding.