Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

September 2019

UNITED WORLD COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

UWC values:

- International and intercultural understanding
  - Celebration of difference
- Personal responsibility and integrity
- Mutual responsibility and respect
  - Compassion and service
- Respect for the environment
  - A sense of idealism
  - Personal challenge
- Action and personal example
1. **Policy Statement**
United World College Costa Rica is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our students. The College expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment by demonstrating their understanding of how each adult working on behalf of the school has an active part to play in protecting students from harm and promoting their welfare.

All staff at UWCCR should adopt an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ in relation to safeguarding and child protection. UWCCR cultivates a climate where everyone should feel comfortable to speak about these matters openly.

**When concerned about the welfare of a student, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.**

2. **Introduction**
UWCCR takes very seriously the duty of the College towards all students entrusted to its care and seeks to provide a residential and educational environment in which all students are safe, secure, valued, respected and listened to, consistent with the IB Learner Profile.

The term ‘safeguarding’ is understood to mean that the College will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of any harm to students’ welfare is minimised. The College understands that where any concerns about a student’s welfare exists, appropriate action will be taken to address those concerns by working in full partnership with other agencies/services where appropriate.

Our work in safeguarding and protecting students must always have regard for the relevant guidance issued by the College’s accrediting agency, CIS; the Standards for Child Protection issued by the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC); and the laws of of Costa Rica.

Our procedures outlined in this policy and supporting policies (see appendix 1) will be followed by all adults, including volunteers, working with or on behalf of UWCCR.

3. **Keeping children safe**
UWCCR has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. The College does this by:

- **Promoting a caring a, safe and positive environment within the UWCCR community.**
- **Ensuring that staff, Board members and volunteers are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection according to their role and responsibilities within the college community.**
• Encouraging the self esteem and self assertiveness of all students through the curriculum so that students themselves become aware of danger and risk as well as what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.
• Understanding how to identify students who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them.
• Working in partnership with all other services and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
• Working closely with the College’s external contractors on safeguarding and site security including secure management of the campus entrance
• Displaying age developmentally appropriate posters that detail contact details for child protection helplines and support
• Always following safer recruitment procedures when appointing staff or volunteers to work in or with our organisation
• Taking all reasonable practical steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances permit; and welcoming visitors in a safe and secure manner
• Operating robust and sensible health and safety procedures and undertaking the required risk assessments when planning out of school activities or trips
• Ensuring that any community groups which use our facilities for the provision of services to children operate appropriate child protection procedures
• Giving all staff the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and safeguarding policy.

4. Managing Safeguarding
All staff must be clear about their own role and that of others in providing a caring and safe environment for all students. All staff must know how they should respond to any concerns about an individual student that may arise.

To this end, UWCCR will ensure that all staff (whether permanent or temporary) and volunteers, know to refer the Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head). It is the responsibility of the school safeguarding committee to designate staff to fill the following roles and ensure they are sufficiently trained to carry out their roles effectively:

(1) Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head Abedeen Remtulla), (2) Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Residential Life Director Leila Mata) and (3) Board Designated Safeguarding Lead (Laurie Frank).

The membership of the UWCCR Safeguarding Committee is:
• Abedeen Remtulla – Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head)
• Leila Mata – Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Director Residential Life)
• Vanessa Cespedes (HR Coordinator)
• Designated staff member(s) (to be selected in September)

5. Staff Training
All staff are made aware, during their induction period (and regularly thereafter), of the systems in place at UWCCR which support safeguarding including:
• UWC Costa Rica Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (this document)
• Staff Code of Conduct
All staff are required to sign a document confirming that they have been made aware of, have read, and that they understand, the above information.

All members of the Safeguarding Committee have successfully completed Child Protection Training

All staff will participate in a training program that will ensure an adequate level of understanding to recognise signs of abuse, neglect or inappropriate behaviour.

6. Recognition of abuse
All staff must be alert to any possible indicators that a child is suffering harm and report any concerns to the College safeguarding committee chair.

Types of abuse include:
- Physical abuse, for example beating or punching; domestic violence; gangs and youth violence; gender based violence / violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Emotional abuse, for example rejection and denial of affection
- Sexual abuse, for example sexual assault, child sexual exploitation, or encouraging a child to view pornographic material
- Neglect, for example failure to provide appropriate care including warmth or medical attention
- Cyber abuse linked particularly to emotional and sexual abuse, for example sexting
- Honour based violence (HBV), including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing
- Faith abuse arising from religion or superstition
- Peer to peer abuse (ie. a student abusing another student)

Signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):
- The student says they have been abused (direct disclosure) or asks a question that gives rise to that inference (indirect inference)
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student’s injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries
- The student’s behaviour is atypical or stands out from the group
- There is a sudden negative change in the student’s behaviour
- The student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons
- The student’s development is delayed
- The students gains or loses weight
- The student appears neglected eg. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed
The student is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers

Attendance and attitude to learning deteriorates

UWCCR recognises that students with special educational needs can face additional safeguarding challenges and that they may face communication barriers and difficulties.

**Staff are reminded never to make an assumption about possible indicators of abuse nor to dismiss an indicator without going further exploration.**

**Protecting against radicalisation**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support forms of extremism. Protecting students from the risk of radicalisation is considered part of UWCCR’s wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting students from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in students’ behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

In relation to radicalisation UWCCR will:

- Assess the risk of students being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology
- Ensure that students are safe from terrorist and extremist material when online in school, through filtering and teaching students about online safety in general.
- Build students’ resilience to radicalisation through the College wellness programme.

**7. Teaching safeguarding**

UWCCR students are taught about safeguarding through the Wellness programme which is delivered by the psychologists and coordinators of the Residential Life Program. The Wellness program will cover knowing appropriate boundaries; how to raise and express concerns; and will explain levels of confidentiality. The programme will also tackle specific forms of harm and abuse such as peer on peer abuse, FGM and radicalisation. The Sexual Misconduct Policy will outline protocols with regard to student to student sexual misconduct.

**8. Responding to concerns about a student**

All students must be able to place their trust and confidence in any adult working in or with the school in a paid or voluntary capacity. They must feel sure that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to appropriately. All staff must therefore know what to do if a child chooses to talk to them about any matter that raises child protection concerns.

All staff must:

*Listen to what the student is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions*
*Respect the students right to privacy but not promise confidentiality*
*Reassure the student they have done the right thing by making a disclosure*
Explain to the student that, in order to keep them safe from harm, the information that has been shared must be passed on

Report has been disclosed to the school safeguarding committee chair as soon as possible

Record, as soon as practicable, what was said using the student’s exact words, including the time and place of the conservation, what was done by whom and in whose presence

Sign and date the record and keep it secure, handing it to the school safeguarding committee chair as soon as possible.

The chair of the school safeguarding committee (or any other committee member he/she designates) will:

- Coordinate a response to any urgent medical needs of the child
- Consider whether the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm
- Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff

9. Concerns and allegations against staff, volunteers and students

UWCCR has clearly defined procedures for dealing with concerns and allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children. These aim to strike a balance between the need to protect students from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are based on the U.K. DfE guidance published in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 4: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff) (September 2016) and should be used where the member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student or may have harmed a student
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student
- Behaved towards a student(s) in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Where an allegation is made against any member of staff (including members of the school safeguarding committee) or a volunteer, the matter should be reported to the chair of the school safeguarding committee who will inform the Head of School.

Where the allegation is made against the Deputy Head of School or Chair of the Safeguarding Committee the person must report the allegation to the Head of School. Where the allegation is made against the Head of School, the person must report the allegation to the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee AND the Board Chair without first notifying the Head of School. The Board Chair, in conjunction with the school safeguarding committee, will be responsible for deciding how to proceed.

Where the allegation is made against the chair of the school safeguarding committee, the Head of School in conjunction with the Board Chair and other members of the school safeguarding committee, will deal with the allegation following normal procedures.
10. **Whistleblowing:**
All staff are required to report any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues that are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm as well as more general concerns which may not immediately seem ‘serious’ enough to constitute a formal ‘allegation’.

**There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided it is done in good faith.**

11. **Reporting Protocols:**

A report must be done in writing (electronically) to the chair and the deputy chair of the Safeguarding committee. A report can be made in a written statement or be given via email. Complaints should clearly and concisely describe the events of the incident(s) in question in narrative format, including when and where it happened, and if there any witnesses. The complaint should also reference any supporting documentation that the complainant may have available to them. The individual submitting the report can ask for confidentiality during the investigative stage. However, if an action is taken to ensure the safety of the student, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (legal rights of the accused and the safety of student may result in the name of the individual doing the reporting being shared with appropriate personnel/authorities).

12. **Records**

**Reported matters:**
No one person within a school can be expected to have the full picture of a student’s circumstances. As a school UWCCR recognises this and is developing a single, comprehensive, detailed, accurate and secure system of reported matters, to be maintained and monitored by the school safeguarding committee to enable patterns to be spotted.

**Student information records:**
UWCCR recognises the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about students and will ask parents/guardians and NCs to provide the following information and to notify the school of any changes:

- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Medical and other needs
- Other factors or reports which may impact on the safety and welfare of the student

13. **Adults working with children: Safer Recruitment**
UWCCR practises Safer Recruitment practices by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with young people.

Key points of UWCCR’s recruitment policy are summarised below. Please see *UWCCR Recruitment Policy and Procedures* for full details.
The UWCCR campus is used by external groups for a variety of activities such as summer schools and UWC short courses. All organisations using our campus and working with young people are required to provide UWCCR with written assurances that safeguarding background checks for supervising adults have been undertaken along with overseas police checks where required. All other adults who may occasionally work at, or visit, the campus and have any access to students are supervised at all times.

14. **Best Practices for Staff (including Volunteers):**

Please refer to the UWC CR Code of Professional Ethics for more information.

Students are still presumed under the care of UWC Costa Rica while they have a formal relationship with the College (First and Second Years). Try to ensure you are not having meetings alone with one student.

- Avoid inviting individual students to your homes
- Avoid seeing students in private and isolated situations
  - Conduct meeting in public areas
  - Keep door and curtains open if possible
- Avoid exchanging notes, comments or e-mails of a very personal nature
- Avoid giving personal gifts to individual students
- Not have a romantic relationship
- Not have physical contact or make comments that can be construed as sexual in nature.
- When sleeping off campus never share room with one student only
- Report if a student expresses a romantic intention.

Guidelines for interactions with recent graduates (‘Third Years’):

Staff should be aware that many of the third year students still have a formal or informal relationship with the school. Staff should endeavour to follow the best practices as listed above for Third Years, specifically those who still have a relationship with the school.

15. **Information of Peer to Peer Sexual Misconduct**

It is the obligation of every staff member to ensure the safety of all students. If a staff member is aware of peer to peer sexual misconduct, it is the duty to report this to the Deputy Head or the Residential Life Director. This report cannot be anonymous. Please refer to the Sexual Misconduct Procedures document.
16. **Investigation and resolution:**
Once a report has been made, the school will conduct an investigation with the advice of legal counsel. If criminal activity is suspected (please refer to summary of Costa Rican Criminal Code below¹), police may be informed and conduct a parallel investigation. At times, an external investigator may be requested. If deemed that there may be the possibility of a safety risk to students, the subject of the investigation may be suspended from the school until the investigation is complete. Due to privacy laws and possible criminal proceedings information of progress or resolution may or may not be shared with others (the advice of legal counsel will be sought).

17. **Monitoring and review**
The school safeguarding committee continually monitors the school’s child protection and safeguarding practices and brings to the notice of the Board and Management Team any weaknesses or deficiencies. The Board, through the Head and Deputy Head, has a duty to remedy any weaknesses that are identified without delay.

An annual report is submitted to the Board that outlines the child protection and safeguarding work that has been undertaken during the previous academic year. Included in the report are details of:

- The names of staff with designated child protection responsibilities
- Confirmation that all new staff and volunteers have been recruited safely and that a record of all staff vetting checks is up to date and complete
- Necessary training has been completed by designated staff involved in safeguarding and child protection
- The training that has been completed by all other staff and volunteers
- Details of any significant incidents
- Details of information and guidance that has been given to staff
- Details of safeguarding and child protection issues included in the Wellness Program
- Details of safeguarding and child protection information given to parents
Footnote 1:

**Child Protection under the Costa Rican Criminal Code**
The following acts can be considered as criminal and will be referred to local authorities (Please refer to the Costa Rican Criminal Code for specific details):

a) Rape:
1. Consists of accessing (penetration) orally, anally or vaginally, in the following cases:
2. When the victim is under thirteen - even with consent.
3. When you take advantage of the victim’s vulnerability or it is found unable to resist.
4. When body violence or intimidation is used.

b) Sexual relations with minors (under 18):
Consists of accessing (penetration) orally, anally or vaginally, with a minor, provided that it does not constitute a crime of rape, in the following cases:
1. When the victim is over thirteen and under fifteen years of age, and the author is five or more years of age.
2. When the victim is older than fifteen and under eighteen, and the author is seven or more years of age.
3. If the author has, as regards the victim, the status of governing, uncle, aunt, brother or sister, cousin or cousin by consanguinity or affinity, whether guardian, or is in a position of trust or authority regarding the victim or his family, whether or not they are related to each other.

c. Paid sexual acts with minors: Anyone who pays, promises to pay or give in return an economic or other advantage to a minor or a third party, so that the minor can perform sexual or erotic acts

d. Sexual abuse against minors: in this case the offender abusively performs acts for sexual purposes against a minor or obliges them to perform them to the agent, himself or another person, provided that it does not constitute a crime of violation.

e. Sexual abuse against persons of legal age: In this case the offender abusively performs acts for sexual purposes against a person of legal age, or obliges them to perform them to the agent, himself or another person, provided that it does not constitute a crime of rape.
Appendices:
1. List of related policies and supporting documentation
2. *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Safeguarding Information for all School Staff* (September 2016)
3. *What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners*

**Appendix 1:**
- UWC CR Staff Code of Professional Ethics
- Regulations and Internal Procedures for Handling Sexual Misconduct Cases
- UWC CR Recruitment Policy
- UWC CR Visitor Policy
- UWC CR Student Code of Conduct

**Appendix 2:**
*Keeping Children Safe in Education: Safeguarding Information for all School Staff* (September 2018)

**Appendix 3:**
*What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners*
[https://www.staffsscb.org.uk/Professionals/Publications/For-Practitioners-Documentation/What-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused.pdf](https://www.staffsscb.org.uk/Professionals/Publications/For-Practitioners-Documentation/What-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused.pdf)