

Student U Child Safeguarding Policy

I. Introduction

Student U is a college-access organization that believes all students in Durham have the ability to succeed. In order to make this dream a reality, Student U creates a pipeline of services to support students through middle school, high school and college. By providing direct services during out of school time in the summer and after-school, and advocating for students and families within schools, we ensure that our students develop the academic skills and personal well-being needed to beat the statistics and succeed in college.

The mission of Student U is to empower students in the Durham Public Schools to own their education by developing the academic skills and personal well-being necessary to succeed in college and beyond.

The Oak Foundation Child Safeguarding Policy was implemented to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all of our students and that all staff are working together to prevent harm to our students.

A. Principles

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- Organizations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- If organizations work with partners they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and associates.

Staff includes:

- All part-time and full-time staff
- All volunteers and interns

Associates includes:

- All Board members
- All partners including local community based partners

Definitions and Terms

Child safeguarding: the responsibility that organizations have to make sure staff, operations and programs do no harm to children, do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse and that any concerns about children's safety are reported to the appropriate authorities

Definitions of Harm

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. it may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

Child sexual exploitation manifests in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods. It may also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men.

Neglect and negligent treatment: allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter

and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

A child is any person under the age of 18 years.

II. Prevention

Protection of children from abuse and protection of the rights of children will be addressed through the following steps:

A. Risk assessment/risk mitigation

A risk assessment of all Student U operations, programmes and project activities will be conducted. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimise the risk to children, and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

B. Safe recruitment

Student U will ensure that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization. Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of child safeguarding.

Background checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), forms an important part of our recruitment policy and covers all those representatives that we have an employment relationship with. If police checks are impossible, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least three references are carried out in all cases.

C. Education/Training

All staff and associates receive Darkness to Light Training, which is a child safeguarding training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and to be fully aware of the procedure for reporting concerns.

Staff will receive a short induction on child safeguarding at the time of their engagement with the organization. Staff with particular responsibilities relating to child safeguarding will be provided with a more in-depth training within 6 months of their engagement.

Associates will be briefed on child safeguarding and their responsibilities under the policy upon engagement with the organization.

Children and families will be informed on Student U's commitment to child safeguarding and what to do if they have concerns about a child.

All staff and children are aware of the designated Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) or Child Safeguarding Focal Point (Clinical Social Worker) who is responsible for receiving reports of concerns and advising on assessing and mitigating risk in line with Student U's policy and procedures.

D. Safe program design

Student U is committed to designing and delivering programs which are safe for children. All programs and projects will be risk assessed for safety and safety strategies developed.

E. Communications - use of images and children's information

In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. Our communications policy/guidelines details our procedures.

F. Social Media Policy

Student U staff members should conduct both their personal and public online presences in a manner consistent with the values of Student U. In all interactions, whether in the built or virtual environment, staff members are representatives of Student U. The following policies apply to online interaction between Student U staff and Student U students only.

G. Responsibilities

The policy has been approved by Student U's Board of Directors, the Safety Committee and Leadership Team.

IV. Partners

Student U engages with a variety of community partners to provide services to our students. In working with any partners who will engage with our students, the following steps must be taken:

- Background checks must be complete on all persons working with students
- Student U will ask the community partner to follow our Code of Conduct & Safeguarding Policies
- Student U staff will periodically check-in with any partner organization to evaluate the partnership and ability to uphold expectations.

V. Code of Conduct or Protocol of Behaviors

The work rules and standards of conduct for Student U are important, and Student U regards them seriously. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the Student U's business. Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

- Inappropriate staff/student interactions;
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property;
- Falsification of timekeeping records;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace;
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of company-owned property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct;
- Violation of safety or health rules;
- Smoking in the workplace;

- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment;
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice;
- Unauthorized use of telephones, or other company-owned equipment;
- Unauthorized disclosure of business “secrets” or confidential information;
- Violation of personnel policies; and
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

VI. Reporting/responding to concerns

All staff and associates are obligated to report on all concerns they have about a child. The Clinical Social Worker at Student U will serve as the Child Safeguarding Officer. Here is the contact information for the individual that currently serves in this capacity:

LaToya S. Adkins, MSW, LCSW
latoya.adkins@studentudurham.org
984-234-9497

Student U will receive disclosures from children with sensitivity and will strive not to re-traumatize children in their handling of complaints. If a child or young person tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

- Listen to and accept what the child or young person says but do not press for information.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Do not investigate and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
- Take the alleged abuse seriously.
- Record carefully what you have heard on the reporting form.

Any report will be treated seriously and with confidentiality. The priority will always be the safety and best interests of the child.

Identifying information about children will be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis only. Any staff member who raises concerns of serious malpractice will be protected as far as possible from victimization or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with serious concerns, provided that concerns are raised in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offense and will be investigated.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all witnesses must cooperate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality

will be protected and information which could identify them will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Checklist of potential organizations, resources and professionals that will be used and/or can support in reporting and responding to concerns:

Legal resources

- Legal Aid of North Carolina
224 S. Dawson Street, Raleigh, NC 27601
1-866-219-LANC (5262)
www.legalaidnc.org

Criminal investigation/prosecution - police and judiciary

- Durham Police Department
505 W. Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701
919-560-4322
<https://durhamnc.gov/149/Police-Department>

Other agencies - health services, NGOs, interagency forums

- Durham Social Services
200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC 27701
919-560-8424
<http://www.dconc.gov/government/departments-f-z/social-services/child-and-family-services/child-protective-services>
- Durham Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Center
3708 Lyckan Parkway Suite 103, Durham, NC 27707
919-403-8249
<https://www.exchangefamilycenter.org/>

Community Organization

- Center for Child and Family Health
1121 W. Chapel Hill Street #100, Durham, NC 27701
919-419-3474
www.ccfhnc.org