

Safeguarding policy

News Associates aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults in a vulnerable situation. We are mindful of its duty of care and legal obligations such as, but not limited to, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

This policy applies to all members of News Associates. However it is specifically aimed at staff, students and volunteers who encounter the following groups through teaching, research, professional services and outreach activities:

- children (i.e. those aged under 16),
- young persons (i.e. those aged 16 to 18), and
- adults in a vulnerable situation. An adult in a vulnerable situation is defined as a person aged 18 or over: who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

This policy does not seek to discourage working with these groups. Instead, it seeks to support these activities and to offer assurances to both staff, students, volunteers and visitors that, through its implementation, News Associates seeks to protect children, young people and adults in a vulnerable situation and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with News Associates students and staff (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity).

Aims and objectives

News Associates wishes to ensure that it maintains the highest possible standards to meet its social, moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults in a vulnerable situation with whom News Associates' work brings it into contact.

While it is impossible to ensure that a child, young person or adult in a vulnerable situation would never come to any harm, the adoption of this policy and associated guidance aims to facilitate the management of the risk associated with the duty to protect such individuals.

This policy is to highlight the four areas that form the basis of the News Associates' approach to safeguarding and to direct staff, students and volunteers to appropriate guidance.

Risk assessment

All staff that intend to, or may be put in the position of, working with children, young people or adults in a vulnerable situation should ensure that they understand the implications of this policy before commencing any programme, event, visit or other activity.

The course director or head of journalism should complete a risk assessment before any new or changed programme, event, visit or any other activity involving children, young people or adults in a vulnerable situation, or before admitting or employing an under-18.

All those involved in the risk assessment process should understand that the risk assessment is not only a way to mitigate or remove any potential risks but may also be a prompt to consider alternative working practices.

Recruitment, selection and employment procedures

News Associates will take all appropriate steps during the recruitment and selection process to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults in a vulnerable situation.

Where a risk assessment has identified that students or staff are likely to have regular contact with or encounter children, young people or adults in a vulnerable situation (which might include regular processing of information), appropriate checks into their eligibility will be required. Such processes will be compliant with News Associates' Equality and Diversity policy.

Dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse

Concerns for the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults in a vulnerable situation could arise in a variety of ways and in a range of different settings. For example, an individual may witness or hear about abuse of an adult in a vulnerable situation in another organisation. It is essential to act quickly and professionally in all cases of suspected abuse.

Any allegation by a child, young person or adult in a vulnerable situation against a member of staff, another student or a volunteer should be reported immediately to the course director or head of journalism. In dealing with any such allegation News Associates has a duty of care both to the child, young person or adult in a vulnerable situation concerned and to the member of staff, student or volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

Training and support

Where required, News Associates will provide appropriate support and training on this policy.

Responsibility

Guidelines will be issued to implement this policy.

The course director will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy. News Associates staff are encouraged to discuss any concerns under this policy with the relevant head of journalism/course director.

The course director will advise on the admission of under-18 students and adults in a vulnerable situation, in conjunction with News Associates staff. The relevant head of journalism will be responsible for monitoring the welfare of under-18 students and adults in a vulnerable situation. This responsibility may be devolved as appropriate.

Safeguarding strategy

News Associates' safeguarding strategy has been developed with the expectation that safeguarding is everyone's business, to promote a company-wide safeguarding culture.

Our strategy focuses on:

- Having a robust infrastructure in place with designated roles and responsibilities of the directors, managers and staff, to include safe recruitment
- Ensuring arrangements for staff development in respect of the protection and care of our students
- Providing clear guidelines to staff and students about the safe use of technology and social media

We identify and act on safeguarding concerns in the following ways:

- To ensure our expectations of trainees' behaviour is clearly outlined in their student contract
- By challenging and confronting all forms of inappropriate behaviour by staff and trainees which makes others feel 'unsafe.' By having a clear company structure in place to report and act on concerns
- To create positive, inclusive environments which are sensitive to the needs of individuals
- To ensure all staff are aware of their personal responsibility for safeguarding as part of their job description, to challenge and report issues relating to safeguarding of trainees and staff and to deal with these consistently

The course director/head of journalism will ensure this policy and strategy is subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation so we continue to be compliant with all legislation and that policies and procedures are adhered to.

Another priority is to ensure we adhere to the principles of the Prevent Duty documents around radicalisation to ensure the whole company understand their role in challenging this, and to review this as part of management appraisals.

This company culture seeks to promote an environment which allows students the opportunity to express their views and further their understanding:

- To ensure staff have access to training that allows them to raise their questions about the Prevent strategy. To identify and refer to relevant agencies if required.
- To ensure staff understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme.