Safeguarding Learner Policy

Protecting learners, children and adults at risk

Document code	BU-POL-SAF-01	**Version**	2.0
Effective date	17 November 2026	**Next review**	17 November 2027
Document owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead	**Approved by**	Dean, Berkshire University
Status	Approved for use	**Applies to**	All learners, staff, agents and contractors

1. Statement and scope

Berkshire University is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all learners. This policy applies to every learner and to every member of staff, assessor, agent, contractor and volunteer. It gives particular attention to **children (anyone under 18)** and **adults at risk**. Our programmes are designed for adults, but we have rules for the rare case of a learner under 18.

2. Legal framework and jurisdiction

Our approach follows recognised good practice for the learners we serve. In England, adult safeguarding is based on the **Care Act 2014** and chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance; child safeguarding follows **Working Together to Safeguard Children**. We also follow the reporting and child-protection laws that apply to us in the United States, including any mandatory reporting duties, and those that apply where a learner lives. Where the law requires a report, that duty overrides confidentiality.

Jurisdiction and interpretation

Berkshire University is a United States institution (Colorado) that delivers online education to learners in many countries. This document applies to every learner wherever they live. Where it refers to UK or EU law, that law is the standard we follow as good practice; it does not claim UK registration, UK regulatory status or UK degree-awarding powers. Where the law of a learner's country gives stronger rights, those rights prevail.

3. Roles

Role	Responsibility in this document
Dean	Accountable officer for this policy. Approves it, decides final-stage cases that the Dean was not involved in, and holds any role below that has not yet been separately assigned.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Receives and decides action on every safeguarding concern; keeps safeguarding records; liaises with external agencies. Appointed by the Dean (the Dean acts until an appointment is made).
Registrar's Office	Keeps academic records, results and certificate verification data. Acts as the Data Protection Lead.

A **Deputy Safeguarding Lead** is appointed by the Dean. Until separate appointments are made, the Dean is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff and agents must know who the Lead is.

4. Definitions

- **Child:** a person under 18.
- **Adult at risk:** a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and cannot protect themselves because of those needs.
- **Abuse and neglect** include physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse; financial or material abuse; neglect; discriminatory abuse; domestic abuse; modern slavery and trafficking; self-neglect; organisational abuse; and online harm such as grooming, exploitation, bullying and harassment. Concerns about radicalisation or extremism are handled as safeguarding concerns.

5. What to do if you are concerned

If someone is in immediate danger

Call the local emergency services first (for example 911 in the United States, 999 in the UK or 112 in the EU). Then tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead **straight away, and in any event the same day**.

For any other concern

(1) **Listen.** Stay calm, do not promise to keep it secret, do not investigate and do not ask leading questions.

(2) **Record** what was said or seen, in the person's own words, with date and time, as soon as possible.

(3) **Report** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at info@berkshireunv.us (mark it SAFEGUARDING) within **24 hours**. Do not wait to be sure.

(4) **The Lead** acknowledges the report, assesses it within **1 working day**, and decides the action: advice or support, monitoring, or a referral to the right external agency, such as child protection services, adult social care or the police. Consent is sought where possible, but a referral is made without it where there is a risk of serious harm or a legal duty.

(5) **Records** are kept securely, the Dean is informed, and the person who reported is told what they need to know, where appropriate.

6. Allegations about staff, agents or learners

Report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to the Dean if the Lead is involved, **the same day**. We take immediate steps to protect those at risk, which may include suspending contact or duties, refer the matter to the proper authority, and cooperate with any investigation. We do not carry out an internal investigation that could prejudice a police or agency investigation.

7. Online safety

- Staff and learners use only our official platforms and email to communicate. Staff do not make private contact through personal social media or messaging.
- Live online sessions follow a code of conduct and may be recorded, with notice, in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Harassment, bullying, sexual content or exploitation online can be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Complaints Policy.
- Where a learner is under 18, we obtain the consent required by law, limit one-to-one contact, and tell the learner and their parent or guardian how to raise concerns.

8. Safer recruitment and conduct

- We verify identity, qualifications and references for anyone working with learners, and carry out the background checks that the law of the relevant country allows, with consent.
- Everyone receives safeguarding induction and refresher training every year, recorded by the Registrar's Office.
- A code of conduct applies to all staff, agents and contractors. Anyone may raise a concern about practice without fear of reprisal.

9. Confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding information is shared only with those who need to know and is kept securely under the Data Protection Policy. Fear of breaching data protection is never a reason to withhold information needed to protect someone.

10. Support

We help the people concerned find appropriate support, including local helplines, counselling and advocacy services.

11. Monitoring and review

The Designated Safeguarding Lead reports to the Dean each year on concerns, referrals, training and lessons learned, and policy review follows any serious case.

12. Related documents

Complaints Policy · Data Protection Policy · Equal Opportunities Learners Charter · Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

Appendix: Safeguarding concern record

Date and time of concern	
Person reporting (name and role)	
Person the concern is about (name, age if known)	
What was said, seen or reported (in their own words)	
Immediate action taken (emergency services contacted?)	
Date and time reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Lead's assessment and decision	
Referral made to / date	
Follow-up and outcome	

13. Approval and review

This document was approved by the Dean of Berkshire University. It is reviewed at least once a year, and sooner if the law, our accreditation context or a serious incident requires it. The Academic Quality Lead keeps the change log.

Name	Mohammed Khalaf
Position	Dean, Berkshire University
Date	17 November 2026
Signature	
Next review date	17 November 2027

Change log: Version 2.0, 17 November 2026. Full revision following an external governance review (jurisdiction statement, unified roles, fair timelines, online-learning provisions, document control).