



# **Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy**

**October 2025**

**The staff member responsible for this policy: Designated  
Safeguarding Lead (DSL)  
Review date: [October 2026](#)**

UWC Mostar - Building bridges between people and cultures through inspiring, quality  
education

## **Table of contents**

|                                                                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>UWC Mostar Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy</b>                          | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Our aims:</b>                                                                      | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>The Safeguarding Team in the College</b>                                           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Scope Of Oversight</b>                                                             | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Prevention</b>                                                                     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Procedures</b>                                                                     | <b>5</b>  |
| Sharing concerns                                                                      | 6         |
| Investigation                                                                         | 6         |
| Avoiding conflict of interest                                                         | 7         |
| Engagement with External Authorities                                                  | 7         |
| Safeguarding Records                                                                  | 7         |
| Transfer of Information                                                               | 8         |
| Contact with Parents/Guardians and the National Committee                             | 8         |
| <b>Supporting Vulnerable and At-Risk Students</b>                                     | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Safe Recruitment</b>                                                               | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Allegations against staff</b>                                                      | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Abuse and Power Imbalance</b>                                                      | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Monitoring and reviewing-the role of the College Board</b>                         | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Appendix A</b>                                                                     | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Definitions of Abuse and Neglect</b>                                               | <b>11</b> |
| Physical abuse                                                                        | 11        |
| Emotional abuse                                                                       | 11        |
| Sexual abuse                                                                          | 11        |
| Neglect                                                                               | 12        |
| <b>Appendix B</b>                                                                     | <b>13</b> |
| <b>What to do if a student tells you that they or another student is being abused</b> | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Appendix C - Standard Reporting Form</b>                                           | <b>14</b> |

Pursuant to Article 29 of the Regulations of the Accredited United World College in Mostar, the College Board at its 49<sup>th</sup> session held on October 24 and 25, 2025, adopted the following:

## **UWC Mostar Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy**

### **Introduction:**

The underpinning policy principles within this document ensure that the health, safety, and welfare of all our students are of paramount importance to all the adults who work at UWC Mostar, hereinafter The College. Students here have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, sexual preference, religion, or disability. They have a right to be safe throughout their time at the College. All members of staff have an equal responsibility to act upon any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a student is at risk of harm.

### **Our aims:**

- to provide a safe environment for students in which to learn, live, and develop;
- to establish what actions the College can take to ensure its students remain safe during their time here;
- to raise the awareness of all staff to these issues and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to identify students who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;
- to set down relevant and effective procedures for those who encounter any issue of child protection.

In addition to protecting students from deliberate harm, safeguarding encompasses many other areas for the College, including:

- student health and safety
- bullying
- racist abuse
- harassment and discrimination, including but not limited to verbal harassment
- drug and substance misuse
- educational visits

- sex and relationship education
- internet safety

As such, this Safeguarding and Student Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with our Health and Safety Policy, Substance Abuse Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Student Behavior Policy, Safe Haven Policy, and the Code of Conduct.

UWC Mostar fully recognizes its responsibility to safeguard students. In doing so, we include the following three main elements in our policy:

**Prevention** Safeguarding is strengthened through proactive education and awareness. The College promotes a culture of safety by providing regular workshops, training sessions, and discussions for students, staff, and residential teams. Educational activities address topics such as personal safety, healthy relationships, boundaries, and digital well-being. In residential and classroom settings, students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, confidence, and language to recognise unsafe situations, seek help, and support one another responsibly.

**Procedures** that clearly outline the expectations of all parties within a safeguarding agenda for preventing, identifying, and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse, concern, and/ or vulnerability. Because of our day-to-day contact with students, College staff are well-placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

**Support** is given to students who may have been abused, who give cause for concern, or who are vulnerable.

At UWC Mostar, the Head of the College retains overall responsibility for addressing issues of sexual harassment and appoints the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Issues will be referred to and discussed by the Safeguarding Team. For purposes of investigation, the DSL may request the services of other staff members outside the Safeguarding Team. Issues related to sexual harassment, abuse, or any form of violence at school are dealt with based on the procedures described in the Protocol on Prevention of Violence in Schools in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

### **The Safeguarding Team in the College is:**

- Head Of College
- DoSW (Ljubica Bajo Behmen)
- Member of the Leadership Team 2
- Member of staff 1 (Deputy DSL Sanja Pandža)
- Member of staff 2 (Senior Tutor Year 1)
- Member of staff 3 (Senior Tutor Year 2)

The Safeguarding Team can appoint an additional Deputy Designated Lead, expand the team as needed, and consult the College's legal officer.

### **Scope Of Oversight**

This policy applies to all students of United World College in Mostar, irrespective of their age, location, and whether the academics are in session or not.

This policy applies to all members of staff and volunteers working within the College. Additionally, this policy applies to all occasional workers, contractors, residents, visitors, and College Board members.

All staff, volunteers, and College Board members must understand the College's Safeguarding Policy, as they may be the first point of disclosure for a student.

### **Prevention**

We recognize that high self-esteem, confidence, a supportive environment, and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to safeguard students.

The College will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- ensure students know that there are adults within the College whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include activities and opportunities for personal, social, and health education which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse or exploitation, both in their communities and the cyber community, and to know to whom to turn for help;

All members of staff must demonstrate a total commitment to safeguarding and student protection. We raise young people's awareness of themselves through our curriculum and develop a trusting climate so that they feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings. We help to develop appropriate attitudes in our students and make them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognize different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

## **Procedures**

UWC Mostar procedures are in accordance with The Protocol On The Procedure In Case Of School Violence of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton of the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Safeguarding and child protection training is provided for all staff regarding:

- their personal, statutory responsibility;
- the agreed local procedures;
- the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse;
- how to support a student who discloses abuse;
- record keeping.

Training will take place once every two years for existing staff and in the first year at the college for new staff.

Every effort is made to ensure that every member of staff, volunteer, and College Board member knows:

- that they have individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the appropriate channels and with all practical immediacy;
- the procedures of the College regarding the recording and reporting of child protection concerns;
- how to take forward those concerns with one of the Safeguarding Team.
- the definition of abuse and neglect (Appendix A), and the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a student who may disclose abuse;

It is ensured that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the College and staff for child protection.

In order to ensure the health and safety of students and encourage students to approach adults in the community to seek help without fear of disciplinary repercussions, a 'safe-haven' will be automatically considered in cases like sexual harassment. This will be as per the Safe Haven policy of the college.

### **Sharing concerns**

Students may share allegations of abuse, bullying, discrimination, and harassment by communicating with any staff member, verbally or in writing, including email.

If a student tells a member of staff that they or another student has suffered abuse, bullying, discrimination, or harassment, the member of staff is asked to act as per Appendix B. If a student reports to any staff member, the staff member should send a report to the DSL

[-safeguarding@uwcmstar.ba](mailto:safeguarding@uwcmstar.ba)

Students may use the reporting form (Appendix C), which allows for anonymous reporting. There is no time limit on the reporting of (sexual) harassment incidents.

### **Investigation**

Upon receipt of a safeguarding report, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL (DDSL) will promptly initiate the investigation and any formal inquiries. An official case file will be opened, and all information will be thoroughly documented, securely stored, and properly recorded.

The Safeguarding team has a main role in identifying the level of accuracy of the reported event.

The Safeguarding Team may conduct general inquiries and contact students as part of their role, but all actions must be carried out in accordance with the Protocol on Prevention of Violence. If, during these inquiries, indications arise that a serious offence may have occurred requiring police involvement, the team should compile all relevant information and promptly share it with the police. The Safeguarding Team must not conduct formal investigations, organize interviews, or take statements from students in matters that fall clearly under the legal competence of the police or the Public Prosecutor of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. The Safeguarding team has to, at all times, during the procedure of verification of reported event, align its activities with the Protocol on

prevention of violence in schools in Herzegovina Neretva Canton and apply the procedural steps as described in this Protocol and in the Rulebook on commendations, awards, and pedagogical measures of the United World College.

The Safeguarding Team will review the report alongside all relevant interviews, written statements, and signed reports from all parties, as deemed necessary. Minutes of all meetings will be taken, signed by all attendees, and formally protocolled to ensure transparency and accountability.

In cases of high-level concern, the Safeguarding Team will make a recommendation to the Head of College, who will issue the final decision. Possible outcomes in such cases may include suspension or expulsion of a student.

For complaints against staff members, the investigating team will submit their findings to the Head of College, who will make the final decision in consultation with the Chair of the College Board.

For complaints concerning the Head of College, the Chair of the College Board takes the lead in close cooperation with the Pastoral Committee of the College Board; the Chair will issue the final decision after consultation with Board members as necessary.

### **Avoiding conflict of interest**

If a member of the safeguarding team handling the report is closely related to the alleged survivor or the alleged offender, or the alleged offender is the person in charge, the DSL or Head of College will ask the member to leave the investigation.

### **Engagement with External Authorities**

Where, during the course of an investigation, the Safeguarding Team determines that a case meets the criteria outlined in the Protocol on the Prevention of Violence in Schools (HNK/Ž), the College will involve relevant external agencies, including but not limited to police and social services. All referrals will be conducted in accordance with legal requirements and established safeguarding protocols, ensuring that information is shared appropriately, confidentially, and only with authorized personnel.

### **Safeguarding Records**

All safeguarding records are maintained securely, either physically or on protected digital drives, and are kept individually for each student. Access is limited to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL (DDSL). Records may be shared with professionals directly involved with



the student, but cannot be released without authorization from the Safeguarding Team. Where required by law or official request, records may also be shared with the Ministry of Education inspectors or the Office of the Prosecutor, particularly in cases involving a criminal investigation, in accordance with safeguarding protocols and legal requirements.

### **Transfer of Information**

All relevant Safeguarding information must be transferred to the new school/ University on request when a student leaves the College. Relevant child and youth protection agencies, or similar if they exist, must be informed of the student's transfer. The Head of the College will ensure that the receiving school or college is fully aware of any safeguarding concerns and that the information is transferred securely. Key documents in the file must be copied and kept at the College. The information shared needs to be accurate and clear about the nature and the stage of the procedure. This means, if a student is undergoing a disciplinary action or if the state authority has been conducting procedures, then the exact information about the stage of the process needs to be shared. In this regard, if a student has been cleared from suspicion or if a student is entitled to an appeal, the College needs to specify this and follow up with the schools/universities when and if a change happens.

### **Contact with Parents/Guardians and the National Committee**

The Head of College or the DSL must ensure that parents/guardians and/or the relevant National Committee are informed of a referral, except in circumstances where notifying them would place the student at risk of further harm, in which case the Center for the Social Services is informed in order to protect the well-being and act in the minor's best interest. Students over the age of 18 have the right to state that they don't want their parents to be informed about the case. This statement needs to be made in writing and signed by both the student and the College staff member to whom the statement has been given. The document needs to have a protocol number assigned and needs to be archived.

### **Supporting Vulnerable and At-Risk Students**

The College is committed to supporting all students in their academic and co-curricular pursuits, fostering self-esteem, resilience, and self-motivation. We strive to create a positive, inclusive, and secure environment in which every student feels valued, respected, and understood, regardless of socio-economic background or personal circumstances.

UWC Mostar recognises that students who have experienced abuse, neglect, or witnessed violence may be deeply affected by these experiences. Such students may exhibit challenging, defiant, or withdrawn behavior. Our approach is to understand the underlying causes of such behaviors in order to provide appropriate, empathetic, and timely support, including engagement with professional counseling services, both within the College and through external partners where necessary.

All members of staff follow the College's Code of Conduct, which ensures a consistent, supportive approach to behavior management. While unacceptable behavior is addressed, interventions are designed to preserve students' dignity and sense of self-worth, reinforcing that they remain valued members of the College community.

### **Safe Recruitment**

The College is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and contractors are carefully vetted before appointment. We follow rigorous procedures, including background checks, reference verification, and adherence to legal safeguarding requirements, to ensure that only suitable individuals work with our students as per the Safe Recruitment policy.

### **Allegations against staff**

When a member of staff witnesses or receives an allegation of professional abuse against another adult who is working with students (including other staff, volunteers, College Board members, occasional workers, contractors, or residents), they should report the matter **immediately** to the Head of College or DSL. If an allegation is made against the Head of College, a referral should be made to the Chair of the College Board. The reporting member of staff should:

- Submit details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated, or via email.
- Keep a record of dates, times, locations, and names of potential witnesses.
- Not investigate the allegation, or interview students.
- Not discuss the allegation with the member of staff.

Allegations against a member of staff no longer working at the College are referred to the Police.

## **Abuse and Power Imbalance**

Within the UWC community, any actions by staff members or other adult members of the UWC Movement that would be considered abusive toward a student under or over the age of consent in any jurisdiction are treated as abuse regardless of the student's age. The age of the student does not negate the violation, due to the position of trust and inherent power imbalance between adults in the UWC community and students, which means consent cannot be freely given in such relationships.

## **Monitoring and reviewing-the role of the College Board**

The College Board is designated to receive, monitor, and review the actions of the College Head and Safeguarding Team concerning serious safeguarding and student protection issues. Any safeguarding complaint against the Head of College or a College Board member will also be received and responded to by the Chair of the College Board. If a staff member is part of the Pastoral Committee, they will be excluded in case of a report against the Head of the College. The College Board recognizes its responsibility concerning safeguarding and child protection and will ensure that it is always an annual agenda item for its meetings. This policy will be reviewed annually by DoSW and checked by the Pastoral Committee. The Chair of the College Board can be contacted via email [cbsafeguarding@uwcmstar.ba](mailto:cbsafeguarding@uwcmstar.ba).

The College Board holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding across the College. In this governance capacity, the Board designates one member as the Safeguarding Lead for Governance. This Board Lead undergoes safeguarding training and provides oversight, ensuring accountability and reviewing reports and safeguarding practices provided by the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Board Lead's role is strictly strategic and governance-focused: they do not manage operational cases or day-to-day safeguarding matters. Instead, they monitor that robust policies, procedures, and resources are in place to protect all students and that the school meets both legal and international safeguarding standards. To maintain independence, the College Board Safeguarding Lead cannot be a member of the school's staff.

## **Appendix A**

### **Definitions of Abuse and Neglect**

A young person is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm or fails to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm, for example, by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a young person. It also includes excessive or inappropriate physical punishment, the use of objects or implements to inflict harm, and forcing a child or young person to engage in physically harmful activities. Physical abuse can occur regardless of intent and may result in both immediate injury and long-term physical or psychological harm.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a young person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the young person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a young person, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development. It may involve failing to protect a young person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a young person's basic emotional needs.

## **Appendix B**

### **What to do if a student tells you that they or another student is being abused**

- Show the student that you have heard what they are saying and that you take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the student to talk, but do not prompt or ask leading questions;
- Do not interrupt when the student is recalling significant events. Do not make the student repeat their account.
- Explain what actions you must take.
- Do not promise to keep what you have been told secret or confidential, as you have a responsibility to disclose information to those who need to know. Sharing Reporting concerns is not a betrayal of trust.
- Write down as soon as you can and no later than 24 hours what you have been told, using the exact words if possible. Keep any rough notes you make.
- Report your concerns to one of the Safeguarding Team as swiftly as possible.
- Do not confront the alleged offender.
- Do not worry that you may be mistaken. You will always be taken seriously. It is better to have discussed it with somebody with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.
- Make a note of the date, time, place, and people who were present at the discussion.

## Appendix C - Standard Reporting Form

### INCIDENT REPORTING FORM CONFIDENTIAL

Anonymous reporting by an alleged survivor implies the possibility for the alleged survivor to remain anonymous, but to provide details on the alleged offender.

Anonymous reporting by a witness implies the possibility for the witness to remain anonymous, but provide details on both the alleged survivor and the alleged offender.

Please be aware that anonymous reporting can not be thoroughly investigated.

|                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Complainant Information</b> (the complainant and <b>survivor</b> can be different people) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reporter's** name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you are reporting an incident, but you are **not** the alleged **survivor**.

**Alleged Survivor's** name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

|                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contact - if reporting against a student or an external individual:</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

I (the person making this report) would like to be contacted by (please check as many as apply):

- ☐ Head of College
- ☐ Director of Student Wellbeing
- ☐ Senior Tutor Year 1
- ☐ Senior Tutor Year 2
- ☐ Psychological Counselor
- ☐ Other staff member: \_\_\_\_\_

#### NOTE:

If reporting against a staff member, you will be contacted by:

- Head of College (if reporting against any staff member)
- The College Board (if reporting against the Head of College)

### Alleged offender/s information

**Note:** If an alleged offender's name or group affiliation is listed, the institution will take action against the accused(s) or the group. That action will include an immediate meeting with the Head of College/ DSL. The meeting is used as an opportunity to collect information from both parties. Further action will follow depending on the severity of the case and all the information collected.

Name(s) of **Alleged offender** (s) (optional):

### Incident Information

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

### Description of the Incident

Provide as many details as possible about the incident. (*Who? When? Where? How?*)

### Submitting this Form

The report can be submitted by:

- Personal e-mail sent to any staff members.
- Personally approaching any staff members.

If in doubt, please do contact the DSL, DDSL, or Head of College.

### CAUTION

By submitting this form, you have hereby guaranteed that, to the best of your knowledge, all the information provided above is truthful. False accusations may result in serious repercussions against the reporter. False accusations and false reporting for actions that fall under the criminal law of FBiH are considered a criminal offence under the legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## **Application of the Policy and its Changes, and amendments**

The College Board is responsible for revising and adopting amendments prepared by the HoC and/or DoSW. This policy has an informative and supportive role and is by no means used instead of the laws and regulations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The amendments and changes to this policy are suggested by the Director of Student Well-being and the Head of College in consultation with the legal officer of the College.

This Policy is complementary to the Rulebook on commendations, awards, and pedagogical measures of UWC Mostar, and in relation to the Rulebook on commendations, awards, and pedagogical measures in line with the laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Rulebook has priority in application.

Number: 9-17-1630-1/25

Date: 27/10/2025



Ivan Lorenčić  
Chair of the College Board