Imperial College Union
Safeguarding Policy

Audience: ICU trustees, permanent staff, casual staff, ICU members and Student Group leaders

Owner(s): Board of Trustees

Created Date: July 2024

Review Date: July 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Imperial College Union (ICU) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all its members, staff, and visitors, especially children and vulnerable adults. This policy sets out ICU's approach to safeguarding, defining our responsibilities, and outlining the structured procedures to manage and respond to safeguarding concerns.

1.2 This policy will work with the Imperial College Safeguarding Policy to ensure effective and comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The ICU Safeguarding Code of Practice (COP) will outline the practical and logistical implementation of this policy.

1.3 This policy aims to:

1.3.1 Ensure a safe environment within all ICU activities and interactions.
1.3.2 Promote welfare and provide safe working, volunteering, and participation experiences.
1.3.3 Establish clear procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns involving children and vulnerable adults in collaboration with the safeguarding code of practice.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all individuals working for, or on behalf of, the ICU, including employees, volunteers, and groups outside the union who hire our spaces, across all ICU facilities and activities.

2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, this also includes the activity of Student Groups both on and off-site.

2.3 It is the responsibility of the relevant staff member to inform, train and support the operationalisation of this policy locally and ensure all relevant parties are informed of this policy.

2.4 The ICU Safeguarding Code of Practice provides the operational details for implementing the safeguarding policy.

3. Definitions

3.1 Safeguarding: the responsibility to make sure staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and vulnerable adults, and that they do not expose them to the risk of harm and abuse.

3.2 Children: Individuals who have not yet reached their 18th birthday (Children Act 1989)

3.3 Vulnerable Adults: Adults who are or may be unable to take care of themselves against harm or exploitation.

3.4 Abuse: Includes but is not limited to physical, psychological, financial, sexual abuse, discrimination, modern slavery and neglect.

3.5 Local Safeguarding Officer: This is the role given to the Managing Director and is appointed by the college safeguarding policy.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This policy is guided by the following legislation and guidelines:

4.1.1 The Children Act 1989 and 2004
4.1.2 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
4.1.3 The Care Act 2014
4.1.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

5. Principles

5.1 ICU adheres to the following safeguarding principles:

5.1.1 Prevention: Ensuring appropriate measures are in place to minimise the risk of harm. Most of the unions' work on safeguarding will be planning and risk mitigation to reduce reportable instances.

5.1.2 Protection: The Union will provide timely, adequate and conscientious support and intervention when reports or concerns are made, outlined in detail in the COP.

5.2.3 Partnership: The union will work cooperatively with external agencies (chiefly, the College) to address safeguarding concerns. External organisations or groups that use our spaces will be engaged directly with safeguarding protocols for our spaces and activity.

5.1.4 Accountability: The Union will lay out clearly and transparency in our COP who is responsible and for what to ensure all staff know who is ultimately responsible for safeguarding members of our community.

5.1.5 Robust Reporting: The Union has a clear reporting system and escalation procedure that is regularly tested, reviewed and known by all staff and student volunteers.

5.1.6 All Staff Trained: The union will ensure that, in addition to the College's Imperial essentials safeguarding module, they will also run in-house sessions for staff about local protocol multiple times across the year and for new staff and volunteers. The COP will outline detailed training procedures.

5.1.7 Risk: The Union will have departmental measures for local risks that feed into a union-wide reporting mechanism which will be overseen by managers and the local safeguarding officer (the Managing Director).

5.1.8 Confidentiality: The Union will operate with the standards of confidentiality needed, and only involve the minimum and essential staff members and storing all reported information securely.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Board of Trustees: To ensure the policy is up to date, sufficient, active and has the authority to approve, own and review the safeguarding policy.

6.2 Managing Director (Local Safeguarding Officer): Ensure the implementation of the policy and COP is fulfilled. Lead the response to safeguarding concerns and act as the escalation point of contact for concerns, manage reporting procedures, and maintain records.

6.3 Managers: Responsible for managing safeguarding risk and mitigation in their areas, responding and supporting staff to make reports and raise concerns. Ensure their teams are trained and act as an escalator to the Local Safeguarding Officer.

6.4 All Staff: Individual members of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and informing colleagues and/or managers of their requirements, for example, regarding training.

6.5 Volunteers: Student lereaders will be trained by staff and should be familiar with the policy, principles of safeguarding, and how to report any concerns.

7. Escalation and College Safeguarding Policies

7.1 Outlined in the COP is the escalation procedure within the union, however on occasion the union will be required to escalate concerns to the college level.

7.2 The union's Local Safeguarding Officer will be the conduit for this escalation and ensure that this policy and the COP ties into the college’s protocol.

8. Timeline for Review

8.1 This policy should have an annual review along with the COP.

8.2 Staff can make continuous improvements to local mitigations and procedures at any point but should make the local safeguarding officer aware of any major changes to procedures. The union encourages sharing best practice for safeguarding and maintaining good working cultures on health and safety.

ENDS.