



Southport
Education
Group

Criminal Convictions

(including pending convictions)

Policy & Procedures

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College has a positive policy of equality and diversity and strives to support learners where ever possible. The College also has a duty of care to safeguard all of its stakeholders including staff, learners and visitors and is committed to providing a safe environment for study and work.
 - 1.2 As part of an ongoing commitment to safeguard all of its stakeholders the College operates a policy whereby all applicants must declare whether they have an unspent criminal conviction.
 - 1.3 The College will make every effort to ensure that applicants with criminal convictions are given every opportunity to study, provided it can ensure its safeguarding commitment to the whole college community.
 - 1.4 Those declaring such a conviction will be risk assessed to gauge their suitability for undertaking a course of study within the College. Additionally, if a current learner is convicted during their course of study, it is their responsibility to inform a member of staff, who will in turn notify a Safeguarding Officer immediately.
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2. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that everyone who works and learns at the College achieves their full potential safely in an environment free from discrimination.
- To have procedures that take account of an individual's right to education balanced by the risk to the College and its wider community.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all learners irrespective of their method of application or enrolment or their type of study including those on further education, school links and apprenticeship programmes, studying either full-time or part-time, whilst attending a College centre, at a College-approved placement or whilst engaging in remote learning.
- 3.2 Any outcome of an assessment taken under this policy will apply to all College sites and all enrolment venues and programmes, wherever these are delivered.
- 3.3 Any risks identified could relate to information / evidence arising prior to or at the time of enrolment or arising post-enrolment whilst studying at the College.

4. Fitness to Practise

- 4.1 Some qualifications require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS). In this circumstance learners must disclose any spent convictions that would appear on a DBS. The onus is on the learner to establish, prior to enrolment, if they will be able to work in the type of sector connected to their chosen course. The College is available to assist with any queries which potential learners may have. Applicants are obliged to tell us about any convictions when enrolling. In signing the College's enrolment form you are confirming that you are 'fit to practise' (see Appendix 2).

5. Declaration of Convictions

- 5.1 Applicants and learners are required to declare if they have an unspent criminal convictions or if they are convicted of/or are charged with an offence during their course.
- 5.2 Applicants requiring an Enhanced DBS must declare any spent convictions either at application stage or during their course of study if the conviction becomes spent.
- 5.3 Exceptions:
- Minor motoring offences – these do not need to be disclosed.
 - Cautions, warnings or reprimands will not be considered, unless there is a requirement to undertake an Enhanced DBS check for their College course.
- 5.4 When assessing convictions as part of the risk assessment process a number of factors need to be taken into consideration including:
- Spent convictions
 - Placement on the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) in line with the Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act
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- Date conviction/s occurred
- Offending history
- Substance misuse
- Mental Health / Vulnerability and Welfare
- Circumstances surrounding conviction
- Sentence/s
- Rehabilitation
- Course appropriateness e.g., timetable, duration, health & safety factors, work placement etc.
- Risk of harm to self / others
- Previous conduct in College (if relevant)
- Fitness to practise
- Engagement with external agencies
- Advice from specialist agencies i.e., Probation, YOS
- References e.g., employers, education etc
- Enhanced DBS requirement
- Risk of re-offending
- Bail restrictions, tag/curfew, other orders e.g., Harassment Order
- Organised Crime Groups/Street Gangs (OCG)
- Criminal exploitation
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

(This list is not exhaustive)

5.5 Additional information can be sought on the government website when looking at spent convictions:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299916/rehabilitation-of-offenders-guidance.pdf

6. Criminal Conviction Assessment Process

6.1 Disclosure

- 6.1.1 All applicants will be asked if they have a criminal conviction at the point of enrolment.
- 6.1.2 If an applicant declares they have a criminal conviction against them at the point of enrolment a Safeguarding Officer will be contacted to meet with the applicant where details of the conviction will be requested and discussed. Applicants/ Learners will be asked if they have an unspent conviction or a potential fitness to practise issue. This meeting may also take place via telephone or video call.

6.2 Criminal Conviction Assessment

- 6.2.1 Depending on the information disclosed, where required a Safeguarding Officer will complete a CC1 form. The risk assessment documentation must be signed by two Safeguarding Officers.
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- 6.2.2 If there are more serious concerns around the nature of the conviction/s, then a CC2 risk assessment will be completed by a Safeguarding Officer and will be discussed and signed off by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). The Designated/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer is able to refuse the application at this stage.
- 6.2.3 Where appropriate the case can be referred under the Fitness to Study procedure.
- 6.2.4 Decisions regarding a potential learner's suitability will be made on an individual basis; full consideration will be given to all the relevant facts.
- 6.2.5 The Safeguarding team will meet termly to re-evaluate current risk assessments and amend if and when required.

6.3 Outcomes of the Assessment Process

- 6.3.1 Following assessment one of the following outcomes will be recommended:
 - a) Confirm the learner's enrolment without any restrictions;
 - b) Confirm the learner's enrolment with conditions. For example, the learner may be allowed to enrol on condition that their course tutor is made aware of his/her convictions; may be allowed to enrol with appropriate support etc. These conditions must be made clear to the applicant and their agreement to them confirmed. If this is not forthcoming the individual will be refused a College place;
 - c) Refer the applicant or learner for further consideration under Fitness to Study procedures;
 - d) Decide not to give a learner permission to commence their course. As part of the response the College will provide details of their reasons for this decision and how a learner can appeal against it.
 - e) Defer a learner's application or enrolment until further information is obtained – such as information from a Probation Officer/Youth Justice where risk information can be gathered, or the outcome of an Enhanced DBS disclosure. If such information is withheld or cannot be supplied, the individual will be refused a college place.

6.4 Communicating Decisions

- 6.4.1 Learners must be informed in writing of the outcome of the CC1 risk assessment. A letter will be sent by the Safeguarding Officer.
 - 6.4.2 Learner Records must be informed by a Safeguarding Officer as to whether a learner should be allowed to enrol.
 - 6.4.3 Any recommendations must be coordinated by the relevant Safeguarding Officer or named person/s within the Risk Assessment document. Where appropriate, member/s of staff may be informed about the conviction in confidence (e.g. Progress Tutors, Security staff, Curriculum Manager, Curriculum Team, Head of Estates).
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- 6.4.4 Any concern regarding fitness to practise in their potential future career must be highlighted to the learner.
- 6.4.5 Where the learner may need to complete a work placement as part of their course, the Work Based Learning Team should be informed.
- 6.4.6 **Note:** *Each time an application is submitted by the applicant it will be reviewed under this process to determine relevance to the course applied for, and a risk assessment completed. When a risk assessment has taken place and a decision has been made not to allow a learner to enrol a flag will be added to the potential learner's record.*

7. Relevant Staff

Safeguarding Officers:

Rebecca Rothwell, Anne-Marie O'Donovan, Jodie Marcucci



Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Liz Jones, Karen Marsh

(Head of Student Services/Safeguarding Manager)



Designated Senior Safeguarding Lead:

Stephen Musa

Vice Principal (Curriculum and Support)

8. Appeals Procedure

- 8.1 In the event that the outcome of the risk assessment is that a learner/potential learner's application and enrolment cannot proceed, then the learner/potential learner has 10 working days to appeal in writing to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Support.
- 8.2 An appeals panel will meet within 10 working days of receipt of the letter. The panel will consist of the Principal and two other College Managers previously unrelated to the case. A member of the original panel will present the case. During periods of remote learning, this meeting may take place via telephone or video call as soon as is reasonable permissible.
- 8.3 All relevant documents will be reviewed along with any new evidence. The panel may take specialist advice where necessary.
- 8.4 The learner/potential learner will then be informed in writing of the decision. The outcome of the appeal is final.

9. Non-Declaration

- 9.1 If a learner answers 'no' to having a criminal conviction and it is subsequently found that they do, the College has the right to terminate the learner's learner agreement with immediate effect. Considerations will be given as stated in Section 5.
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10. New Convictions

- 10.1 If a current learner is charged/convicted during their course of study, it is their responsibility to inform a member of the Safeguarding Team so a risk assessment can be carried out (as set out in Section 6).
- 10.2 If it is found that a learner has not declared a conviction to the College it has the right to terminate the learner's learner agreement with immediate effect.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 The College will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by ensuring that personal data collected in relation to this policy is: -
- Collected and processed lawfully, fairly and transparently for only specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes. Further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes.
 - Adequate, updated and relevant and not excessive for the purposes it was collected.
 - Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures. Including not being transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.
 - Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed. Personal data may be stored for longer periods solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 The Data Protection Act and GDPR are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, they are bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about learners, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.
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12.2 Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of learners and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. “personal data”. Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

12.3 There may be occasion where the College is obliged to disclose information, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent:

- Where the learner’s behaviour threatens their safety or safeguarding, and that of others;
- *Or* where the College would be liable to civil or criminal liability for failure to disclose.

11. Other Relevant Procedures

12.1 Related policies and procedures include:

- Admissions Policy
 - Positive Behaviour Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
 - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - GDPR and Data Protection Policy
 - Fitness to Study and Practise Policy and Procedure
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What are the risks?	Evidence	Who might be harmed and how?	Level of risk (RAG)	What can be done to reduce this risk?	Residual risk (RAG)

Staff Signatures:

Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	