

## Hadlow College: the journey to a Grade 1



**Hadlow College** is the land based college for Kent. Its main site is in Hadlow; with three outcentre sites in Canterbury, Mottingham (south London) and Medway, totalling a thousand acres. The College has approximately 850 full time FE learners, 600 HE students and 1500 part time learners studying at the College. The College also has residential accommodation with 160 16-18 year olds and 55 19+ learners living on site.



With the introduction of the safeguarding agenda the College immediately recognised the challenges it faced with Safeguarding on such an extensive open main site, with high risk curriculum activities and with the need to keep residential learners safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Training across the College**

The Senior Management Team was committed to the robust implementation of the safeguarding agenda. In July 2009 the profile of safeguarding was raised with LSIS training for all 42 managers in the College. This was followed in November 2009 with 220 curriculum and support staff receiving LSIS training. This approach ensured that all staff were made fully aware of the importance of safeguarding. The message is reinforced regularly through the Principal's termly staff presentations and through the College staff newsletter - Planet Hadlow.

Safeguarding training was also embedded into the induction programme for all staff and there is a requirement for staff to update their safeguarding training every three years. This is carefully monitored through staff development records and through appraisal. Training was also given to the Governing body and this was delivered at the end of a full Board meeting to ensure maximum attendance. In order to ensure that the College was able to deliver safeguarding training in-house, 2 Senior Managers were trained as facilitators through LSIS. This now enables us to deliver training on demand.

### **A safeguarding structure**

Alongside all of the above, a formal safeguarding structure was put into place. This structure at a senior level consists of a responsible Governor, who is the Chair and on the Safeguarding Committee and 3 Senior Managers. The Vice Principal has overall responsibility for Safeguarding. The Associate Principal, Student Support Services, is responsible for student safeguarding and the Associate Director, Human Resources is responsible for staff safeguarding. The 3 Senior Managers undertook LSIS Designated Persons training. There are also two Designated Child Protection Co-ordinators working within the Student Support Services team.

### **A culture of safeguarding**

Although there was significant investment in training it was recognised that this would not be effective unless safeguarding was embedded into every activity that went on across the College. Therefore there was a review of all policies and procedures that were related to safeguarding learners. We cross referenced policies and procedures to the safeguarding agenda and to our Safeguarding Strategy and Safeguarding Policy. In particular we raised the profile of Lone Working, Whistleblowing, Bullying, Risk Register, Critical Incident and all associated Health and Safety Policies e.g. risk assessments and work placements.



### **Safer recruitment**

All managers responsible for recruiting staff were trained in 'safer recruitment'. As well as maintaining the Single Central Record, we had always enhanced CRB checked all staff and governors but we changed the policy to ensure that staff could not commence employment until the CRB check had been received by the College; in one case this meant a Senior Manager not starting for eight weeks. The enhanced CRB checks are renewed every three years which, although not a legal requirement, we deemed to be good practice. All recruitment documentation including adverts, application forms, job descriptions, etc. were adapted to refer to safeguarding and safeguarding is included in interview questions. As a residential College we have approximately 20 staff living on site and, in some cases, with their families. This means that all staff and any family members over the age of 16 must be enhanced CRB checked every 3 years. We also have guidelines regarding their responsibility for their visitors whilst on site.

### **An open campus**

In particular we were aware that our site was very open and we reviewed access to the site. A feature of the college is our commerciality and therefore we have public access to areas such as the garden centre, gardens and the tea room. Some student areas had traditionally been open to the public such as our restaurant and the decision was made to close this to the public. The College site was divided into public and private areas and

appropriate signage was erected making clear which areas were accessible to the public and which were not. The Principal met with people from the village through the Parish Council and other forums to explain why these changes were being made and to ensure that we maintained positive relationships with the local community.

The Visitor Protocol was launched and this included the introduction of 'subsidiary receptions' at each entrance to the site, a signing in protocol and the requirement for visitors to wear orange lanyards to identify them as different to staff who wear silver lanyards and students who wear green lanyards. In addition, a Contractor's Code of Conduct provided clear guidelines for expectations whilst on site and a Visiting Lecturer Code of Conduct was introduced.

### **Our students**

Students were made aware of the safeguarding agenda early on in the process and this message is consistently reinforced throughout the organisation. Learners are required to wear their identity cards at all times when moving around the site. The staff in the library, restaurant and other services do not serve students who do not have their identity cards with them.



Our notices, signage and literature use the word safeguarding to ensure that it is a strong and consistent message sent to students. Awareness is also raised through group tutorials, the student Heartbeat newsletter and notice boards across the College. The annual Student Conference in 2009 had safeguarding as a key theme and student representatives sit on the Safeguarding Committee along with local external representations such as the police.

### **Measuring the impact**

Safeguarding is embedded into all College activities and this is reflected in the Ofsted report in June 2010 when the College was given Outstanding for safeguarding and in the best practice survey report in October 2010 where the College was described as '*having a well embedded culture of prioritising safeguarding*'. Students and staff are empowered to challenge anything that they consider may have a safeguarding implication. As a college we are committed to safeguarding all our students, whatever their age and all our staff.

**For further details contact Lynda Brown, Vice Principal, Hadlow College.**