

Student Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out expectations from UWC Maastricht (UWCM) staff, contractors, volunteers and guests of the school.

The aim of the policy is to ensure the safeguarding of all students by ensuring that adults understand and uphold appropriate relationships and boundaries with the young people in their care in order to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of all students.

Staff: employees, professional service providers, other paid education and care participants, tertiary students, and volunteers

Cover: for all school and school related activities, be they on campus, off-site, home visits, out of school hours care, vacation times, host-families

Students: all children and young people enrolled at or attending UWCM or one of its events or living on campus

Legal and international parameters

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child: The Convention enshrines the entitlement of all children, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality, to be protected from sexual abuse, to receive special help if they are abused, to have their opinions heard about matters that affect them, to receive and share information, and to be treated with dignity if disciplined.

Dutch Law:

- The Youth Care Act (Wet op Jeugdzorg - December 2001, updated 2005).
- The Social Support Act (Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning - 2007, updated 2015).
- The Dutch Reporting Code (Meldcode Huiselijk geweld en kindermishandeling - March 2013).

Establishing appropriate boundaries

Fostering supportive and trusting relationships with students is at the heart of our enterprise. Through these positive relationships we learn more about ourselves, each other and the world and are moved towards positive action. Staff role-model positive relationships and should be aware of the significant influence that they have in the lives of our students (and their families) and recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.

Establishing appropriate boundaries ensures that staff do not compromise student welfare.

UWCM has a unique international student population and the advice given uses norms that reflect both the host country expectations of the Netherlands and more generalised expectations across other international and national schools.

The following table gives examples of boundaries and potential violations.

Boundary	Potential violation
Communication	<p>Inappropriate comments about a student's appearance, including excessive flattering comments.</p> <p>Inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature (eg questions about a student's sexuality or his/her sexual relationship with others).</p> <p>Disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of, or manner towards, students based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation.</p> <p>Use of inappropriate pet names.</p> <p>Vilification or humiliation.</p> <p>Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature.</p> <p>Obscene gestures and language.</p> <p>Facilitating/permitting access to pornographic material.</p> <p>Facilitating/permitting access to sexually explicit material that is not part of endorsed curriculum.</p> <p>Failing to intervene in sexual harassment of students.</p> <p>Correspondence of a personal nature via any medium (eg phone, text message, letters, email, internet postings) that is unrelated to the staff member's role. This does not include class cards/bereavement cards etc.</p>
Physical contact	<p>Unwarranted or unwanted touching of a student personally or with objects (e.g. pencil or ruler).</p> <p>Corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking etc.).</p> <p>Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a student (e.g. massage, kisses, and tickling games) or facilitating situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a student. Inappropriate use of physical restraint.</p>
Place	<p>Inviting/allowing/encouraging students to attend the staff member's home.</p> <p><i>(unless you are fulfilling the role of a residence mentor, approved to do so as part of the home stay programme or facilitating a one-off (not regular) activity with a group of Diploma Programme students).</i></p>

Place (continued)	<p>Allowing student access to a staff member's personal internet locations (e.g. social networking sites).¹</p> <p>Attending student's homes or social gatherings that are not part of the school programme.²</p> <p>Being alone with a student outside of a staff member's responsibilities.</p> <p>Entering change rooms or toilets occupied by students when supervision is not required or appropriate.</p> <p>Transporting a student unaccompanied.</p> <p>Using toilet facilities allocated to students.</p> <p>Undressing using facilities set aside for students, or in their presence.</p>
Targeting individuals or students	<p>Tutoring UWC Maastricht students (outside education sector's directions or knowledge).</p> <p>Giving personal gifts or special favours.</p> <p>Singling the same student out for special duties or responsibilities</p> <p>Offering overnight/weekend/holiday care of students as respite to parents.</p>
Role	<p>Adopting an ongoing welfare role that is beyond the scope of their position or that is the responsibility of another staff member (eg a counsellor) or an external professional, and that occurs without the permission of senior staff</p> <p>Photographing, audio recording or filming students via any medium when not authorised to do so and without required parental consent.</p> <p>Using personal rather than school equipment for approved activities, unless authorised to do so.</p>
Possessions	<p>Correspondence or communication (via any medium) to or from students where a violation of professional boundaries is indicated</p> <p>Still/moving images or audio recordings of students on personal equipment or kept in personal locations that have not been authorised</p> <p>Uploading or publishing still/moving images or audio recordings of students to any location, without parental and Leadership consent.</p>

Sexual relationships

Sexual relationships between staff and students are not permitted.

This includes sexual relationships between staff and students where the student is legally above the age of consent.

A staff member may be investigated whereby a relationship is formed between a staff member and recently graduated student regarding the nature of their relationship whilst the student was at UWCM.

Staff duties within this Policy

Staff have a duty to report any suspected child abuse following the action plan for responding to signs of domestic violence and child abuse.

Staff may also observe behaviours in other adults that they view to be inappropriate rather than abusive or that sit on the border of violating a professional boundary. Staff must discuss this with a member of the Leadership Team or the HR Manager.

Staff must take appropriate action if students disclose information about inappropriate behaviours of other adults and must not minimize, ignore or delay responding to such information.

The Leadership Team has the responsibility to record and respond to all cases reported to them and act within the Dutch legal framework.

Endnotes

¹ **Social networking sites:** Staff in education and care settings are expected to model responsible and respectful conduct to the students with whom they work. Staff need to consider the electronic social environments they utilise as part of this community and employer expectation. The internet does not provide the privacy or control assumed by many users. Staff must appreciate that no matter what protections they place around access to their personal sites their digital postings are still at risk of reaching an unintended audience and being used in ways that could complicate or threaten their employment. Staff should be aware of the following expectations in considering their use of social networking sites:

- They have considered the information and images of them available on their sites and are confident that these represent them in a light acceptable to their role in working with students.
- They do not have students in their education community as ‘friends’ on their personal/private sites.
- Comments on their site about their workplace, work colleagues or students, if published, would not cause hurt or embarrassment to others, risk claims of libel, or harm the reputation of the workplace, their colleagues or children and young people.

² **Working in our UWCM international community:** UWCM staff understand that they work in an international community with strong ties and a network that supports each other in the absence of a wider family or social network. This means that activities and events are organized through groups such as the school, through the Parent Support Group or via staff or other community members who share information and host or attend events outside of school.

As such there are additional challenges in managing professional boundaries. Staff are more likely to have social relationships with the parents of the students with whom they work and this means they will have legitimate reasons, on occasion, to attend social events with the students with whom they work, to visit their homes or to be visited by them in the company of their parents. Staff also have children who are friends and will attend and host playdates with children within the school community.

These social engagements are an important part of community life and a positive contribution to the wellbeing of staff working in country and local communities.

Following the advice below will assist staff to enjoy these social engagements without compromising their professional responsibilities. The guiding principles in managing these situations are that:

- Social contact should be generated via the relationship the staff member has with the parents of students or by an event (such as a sporting event).
- Staff should avoid being alone with students in these situations.
- Staff should conduct themselves in a way that will not give others reason to question their suitability to work with students and that will not create discomfort for students in their learning relationship with them.
- Staff should politely refuse to discuss matters relating to the workplace and should not discuss a student’s learning or social progress other than at times specifically set aside for that purpose.

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