

Safe Working Practice Guidance**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document has been drawn up to ensure staff are aware of the procedures to follow when dealing with potential safeguarding situations involving students. Including how to make a referral to the Safeguarding team (see section 4). This document assists staff in maintaining entirely proper and professional relationships with young students, however this guidance is also applicable to all students. It attempts to provide a clear and unambiguous picture of the boundaries associated with staff roles and the use of power and authority. It is based on the experience of practitioners and cases where teachers found themselves in difficult situations, so we are confident that it will prove to be useful.
- 1.2 It is stressed that this document is not a legal document but is intended to provide guidance to employees in carrying out their responsibilities. Breach of the guidelines provided in this document may result in a full investigation in line with the Group's disciplinary procedure.
- 1.3 As employees of the Group, staff are required to demonstrate high standards in their exercise of authority, their management of risk, in the proper use of resources and in the active protection of students from discrimination, radicalisation and avoidable harm. This document is designed to both be useful for staff in avoiding situations that might lead to allegations against them, and to reassure other parties, e.g. parents, schools, the LEA and funding bodies, that a strategy exists to safeguard students.
- 1.4 Staff need to be prudent about their own conduct and vigilant about the conduct of others, so that their relationships with students remain, and are seen to remain, entirely proper and professional. It is recognised that staff are vulnerable to the possible consequences of their close professional relationships with students and to the potential for malicious and misplaced allegations being made by students, either deliberately or innocently, arising from the normal and appropriate associations that staff may have with them.
- 1.5 There is an onus upon staff to take full responsibility for their conduct and observe and model the British values of individual liberty, rule of law, democracy, mutual respect and tolerance.
- 1.6 It should be noted that wholly unfounded allegations are uncommon and tend to arise from inappropriate (sometimes unwitting) adult behaviour. Malicious allegations are very rare.
- 1.7 This document has been written to be used alongside the Teachers' Standards for Sixth Form College Teachers (Appendix 1), the Education & Training Foundation Professional Standards and the Society For Education & Training's Code of Professional Practice document originally written by the Institute for Learning (IfL). The IfL is no longer a mandatory body; however the SET continues to use this guidance and has amended it appropriately. Please see Appendix 2 for this document.

2.0 OUR COMMITMENT AND LEGAL DUTIES

- 2.1 The duty of staff is to:

1. Train, instruct, guide and educate the students assigned to them according to the learning needs of those students.
2. Promote the general progress, safeguarding and wellbeing of individual students and of any class or group of students assigned to them.
3. Ensure the health & safety of students while they are in their care.
4. Provide advice and guidance to students on educational, personal and social matters including the provision of information about sources of more expert advice on specific questions.
5. Maintain good order and discipline among students and promote their development.
6. Have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

2.2 These principles are intended to guide staff members and ensure that they give paramount consideration to the student's safeguarding and wellbeing by respecting and attempting to understand the following:

- The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the person concerned (considered in the light of his/her age and understanding).
- The student's physical, emotional and learning needs.
- The likely effect on the student of any change in his/her circumstances.
- The student's age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, background and any other relevant characteristics.
- Harm that the student has suffered or is at risk of suffering.
- That they owe a duty of care to the student for whom they are responsible.
- They never seek gratification of their own emotional or physical needs in their relationships with young students and relationships must always be professional, appropriate and justifiable.
- That the Group's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures have primacy over other requirements and this document attempts to be supportive and complimentary to those procedures.

3.0 GUIDELINES FOR ALL RELEVANT STAFF

3.1 Physical contact

As a general principle, staff should not engage in physical contact with their students or vulnerable adults. There may be very limited occasions when a student needs comfort or reassurance, which may include physical comforting. Any such contact should be appropriate and sensitive to the student's wishes and feelings and should be a response to an exceptional situation, i.e. there should be no unwanted physical contact, however well intentioned.

It is recognised that some students require physical assistance due to the nature of their disability; however such contact must always be acceptable to the student and be within their agreed plan of care. Furthermore, be aware that any physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, parent/carer or observer. Such contact can include well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which, if repeated with an individual student, could lead to serious questions being raised.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with their students from time to time in the course of their training activities, for example when showing a student how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment and First Aid – CPR training. Staff should be aware of the

limits within which such contact should properly take place and should consider the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the student.

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the young person's educational needs, NOT the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

1. Develop sports skills or techniques;
2. To treat or prevent an injury;
3. Any other areas where physical contact of the delivery would follow the same logic e.g. carrying out First Aid - CPR and beauty treatments

The adult should explain the reason for the physical contact to the young person. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the young person for permission.

The contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts. Physical contact should not take place in secret or out of sight of others. All injuries should be fully recorded by staff.

Any form of physical punishment of students is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. It is particularly important that employees understand this both to protect their own position and that of the Group.

There may be occasions where it is necessary for a member of staff to physically restrain a student to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to himself/herself or others. In such cases only the minimum force necessary must be used and any action taken must be to restrain a student. Where the member of staff has taken action to restrain a student he/she should report the matter to their manager.

3.2 **The practice of physical intervention**

Physical intervention can be defined as “the reasonable application of the minimum necessary force to overpower a student with the intention of preventing them from harming themselves or others, or from causing serious damage to property”.

Physical intervention should only be used exceptionally, when unavoidable and in keeping with the incident leading to it. It should be primarily for the benefit of the student and, though immediate, always be a considered response.

Physical intervention should not be used as a form of punishment or, in normal circumstances, to enforce compliance with instructions. It should not be attempted where the member of staff is thereby put at undue risk.

Incidents of physical intervention should, in appropriate circumstances, be subject to debriefing for staff involved and lead to a review of strategies for managing the behaviour of students between relevant parties. All incidents should be recorded in writing including any written account made by other people present.

Where staff themselves are the subject of physical attack by students or their parents/carers, they should report the incident to their manager.

Where physical intervention is deemed necessary it is advised that two staff be involved.

3.3 **Sexual contact with students**

There is NO acceptable behaviour that has either explicit sexual connotations or innuendo between a member of staff and a student for which they have any form of direct responsibility. Any such behaviour will always be treated as extremely serious and must be reported immediately.

The College considers that sexual contact with a young student is a breach of trust even where the person is over the age of 16.

3.4 **Meetings with students**

Staff should be aware of the potential risks which may arise from interviewing individual students in private. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Meetings with students away from educational or business premises normally utilised should not take place unless specific approval has been obtained from those responsible for the student.

Where such conditions cannot apply staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. The use of “engaged” signs for example, are not advisable and where possible another person should be present or nearby during the interview.

If necessary to detain a young student for any length of time after the end of normal hours, prior warning must be given to the young student’s parents/carers or manager.

Staff should avoid providing students with lifts in their own cars particularly on a one to one basis.

Staff undertaking trips away from College with students must ensure that the trip is properly set up in accord with the Visits Procedure. There is no such thing as an unofficial trip and it is the responsibility of any staff member undertaking a trip with a student to ensure that appropriate authority has been obtained from the relevant manager and that there are sufficient members of staff to ensure proper supervision of the party at all times.

Staff should be aware that their actions should withstand public scrutiny at all times.

3.5 **Use of External Speakers**

Staff must be aware of the potential risks which may arise from the attendance of external events or the use of external speakers in College. It is essential that staff ensure that external speakers that they bring into college are not a risk to students by expressing extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups. As such, staff that arrange external speakers must read the Organising Events with External Speakers Policy and complete the Approval Form for the Use of External Speakers. Staff should remain present throughout the event or arrange for a suitable alternate staff member to be in attendance.

3.6 **Caring/First Aid**

If a student complains of injury or sickness, a judgement should be made as to whether he/she should be referred to a person qualified in first aid or advised to see his/her own doctor. If the student is a young learner their parents/carers should also be informed. Staff that have to administer first aid (normally a trained first aider) are advised that, wherever possible, another adult is present, if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

Where possible and where appropriate to the wishes of the student, another adult should accompany employees who have to help students with personal care and students should, wherever possible, be encouraged to deal with such matters themselves.

Where it is necessary to assist with/supervise dressing or undressing, staff should be of the appropriate gender and must be careful to protect the dignity of the student.

Male staff should not, as a general rule, enter female toilets nor should female staff enter male toilets, except in extreme situations such as fire, or where there may be a threat to life or limb.

3.7 **Provision of advice and guidance**

Staff may from time to time be approached by students for advice. Students may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the student to a member of staff of another gender or to one with acknowledged expertise, experience or responsibility for that student. Staff must in these circumstances use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

Staff are advised **never to stop a free-flowing account/disclosure** of abuse but to make sure that at an appropriate point they inform the young person that they cannot keep such information confidential and need to tell someone else to get help. Example: 'Thank you for telling me, I now need to tell (where possible give the name and position of who will be told) so that we can get some help for you and younger siblings.'

A young student may ask a member of staff to 'keep a secret', or to promise not to tell other people what they are about to tell them. Where this happens the member of staff must explain that they are not able to promise confidentiality as they may need to tell someone else if they are to help the young person.

Where a young person is told by a member of staff that they cannot promise confidentiality the young person may decide not to continue telling. If a young person starts to say something and then stops, the member of staff needs to try to leave it open for the young person to come back to the discussion; the member of staff must act, following the Child Protection procedures. It may be appropriate to refer the young person to available counselling/medical services, for instance their GP or a school/ college based service.

Remember - if in doubt - Act

Please also refer to the *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults* for further information.

3.8 **Social Contact**

Social contact with young students, other than that which is college based or organised by a school, should be positively resisted.

It is recognised that there may be occasions when accidental or reasonable social contact may be unavoidable, e.g. meeting young students at social venues open to the general public or in shops or at private parties. In such circumstances, staff should be mindful at all times of their professional relationship with young students.

If the nature of social contact is significant, and results in a member of staff offering advice, for example the young student makes a disclosure of abuse, staff should both record the event and inform their manager.

The Group actively discourages staff members from giving out personal phone numbers to students. When taking a group of students on a college trip the Group advises staff to take a Group mobile phone. There are however some situations, such as incidents during recreation, some trips, where it may be considered safer to provide students with a contact number. In these circumstances staff are reminded to consider carefully the purpose of sharing their personal phone number prior to doing so. .

Staff should only obtain phone numbers for official purposes e.g. trips from students (and not on their personal phones) other than from the college database for the purposes of official communications.

Email communications should always be professional and should be sent from a staff work account and to an appropriate account for example Teacher Group emails. Staff should exercise caution when considering the possible implications of having ex-students especially those who have siblings at the college as 'friends'. Staff should also be aware that these sites are in the public domain when posting comments or photographs.

3.9 **Social Networking**

The Group makes use of Social Media within a teaching and learning context for additional communication, support, discussion and showcase between staff and students. The majority of use is centred on Facebook (for closed groups), but other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram have been developed. All these have strengthened communication, support and collaboration between staff and students and student to student interactions.

The Group advises staff to check that their privacy settings are in place on any social media site and within the guidelines set out in the support information available on SharePoint. This ensures that no-one has access to view any profile or personal information, including contact information and photographs. Please see separate *Social Media Policy* for further information.

Staff need to keep personal and College profiles separate on social media sites, to make sure that safeguarding is a priority. Staff must create an account linked to their Group email address (not their personal accounts), if they are to make use of Social Media with their students for college purposes. Under no circumstances must tutors add students as 'Friends'. This is referenced clearly in the guidance procedure documentation and needs to be reinforced. Staff are also discouraged from communicating with students via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr and others

A member of staff should be aware that, when potentially compromising information is posted on social media sites, there is a danger that it may be accessed by colleagues and/or students and as a result, seriously impact upon that colleague's professional standing. For example, if a member of staff posted information about an aspect of their private life relating to areas of sexual behaviour, alcohol, drug misuse, violence or anything that was of an illegal nature, this would be considered inappropriate.

Should any inappropriate information be posted by a member of staff and it became common knowledge, then professional relationships (those of mutual respect, professional distance, acting as a role model, etc.) with students could be compromised. This would be considered as a serious disciplinary offence by the Group.

Staff are strongly advised that they:

- Must not engage in activities on the Internet or social media which might bring the Group into disrepute.
- Must not use the Internet or social media in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, teachers or tutors.
- Are aware that they can be putting themselves in a vulnerable position when communicating with young people or vulnerable adults via social media.
- Do not invite students to be a 'friend' or visit their personal sites or accounts.
- Do not accept invitations to be 'friends' with students.

The Group has a Social Media Policy and guideline/procedures (especially for Facebook and Facebook Groups) for use, which offers full details on the management and adoption of these systems.

3.10 Relationships between Staff and Students

Staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the student, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

Comments by staff to students, either individually or collectively, can be misconstrued. As a general principle, staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about students, which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst young students in a class, training situation or elsewhere (other than in planned debate during, for example, enrichment activities) which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the training session or the circumstances. However it is recognised that a topic raised by a young student is best addressed rather than ignored. It is appropriate for staff to advise the young student where they can access further advice and support.

Staff should be careful in their use of language/terminology that may be misconstrued.

The systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments such as those that refer to a student's body, intelligence, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, age or ethnicity in any way are unacceptable.

If a member of staff feels that a young person is developing a crush or infatuation it is their responsibility to discuss the situation with their manager.

Staff should recognise their professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of students, to avoid conflicts of interest, to respect the trust involved in the staff/student relationship and to accept the constraints and obligations which are part of that responsibility.

Staff should ensure that care is taken before responding to any cyber-bullying incidents where they themselves are the subject of the incident and discuss the matter with an appropriate person at College (Please see *Social Networking Policy* for further information)

- 3.11 Should a personal relationship already be in existence between a member of staff and an adult learner, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform their manager. He/she will not be required to give details other than the student's name and the nature of the association. If the member of staff would prefer not to go directly to their manager he/she should contact Human Resources.
- 3.12 The College understands that there may be other times when a member of staff already has an established relationship with a young learner of Shrewsbury Colleges Group, such as a family member or close family friend and in such circumstances the College expects employees to use their professional judgement in exercising this guidance appropriately. Should this situation arise, the College recommends that the member of staff informs their line manager of the pre-existing relationship to discuss appropriate behaviour and conduct with the student as outlined in the Safe Working Practice Guidance.
- 3.13 The consequences of failure to disclose a relationship, which involves a conflict of interest, may be a breach of the Safeguarding Employment Policy which may lead to disciplinary action.

4.0 REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

- 4.1 There is a poster in all classrooms showing the details of the safeguarding team appropriate to each campus along with their contact details.
- 4.2 All concerns regarding child protection matters should be reported immediately to the designated person at the appropriate campus. Dulcie Knifton for English and Welsh Bridge on (01743) 235491 ext 309/4215 or 07970168945. At London Road campus call Sue Croxon on (01743) 342345 or 07792 147376. If it is not possible to contact the appropriate lead person above then call Steve McAlinden on 07970 168953. These designated Safeguarding Leads will be responsible for determining such action as is necessary under the safeguarding procedures contained within this document.
- 4.3 Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, the member of staff should report the matter to their manager.
- 4.4 Such reporting is especially important in any case where a member of staff has been obliged to restrain a student physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or themselves, or where he/she has been personally attacked by another student, parent or carer.

5.0 CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

- 5.1 The consumption of alcohol whilst at work – other than in the circumstance described below - is not allowed and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.2 The consumption of alcohol is allowed at officially sanctioned work events where alcohol may be provided with food, but it is the responsibility of staff to ensure that this is modest and does not adversely impact on their duties or conduct.
- 5.3 However, where a member of staff is due to drive on Group business during the shift the consumption of alcohol even during officially sanctioned work events, breaks or immediately prior to commencing work is not allowed and may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- 5.4 The consumption of alcohol during breaks and immediately prior to commencing work is discouraged but not prohibited. However, if this results in an adverse or unacceptable effect on an employee's conduct or work performance, this will need to be addressed by their manager in the context of this guidance.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY OF THE GROUP

- 6.1 This Policy has been subject to an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment. All individuals will be treated equally and fairly in the application of this Policy. All reasonable requests to accommodate requirements in terms race, age and disability will be accommodated, as long as it is practicable to do so.

Teachers Standards for Sixth Form College Teachers

Standard 1 – Effective Teaching and Learning

A teacher must:

S1.1 Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students.

For example, teachers will

- Establish a safe and stimulating environment for students, rooted in mutual respect
- Set goals that stretch and challenge students of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- Demonstrate the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of students

S1.2 Promote good progress and outcomes by students

For example, teachers will

- Be accountable for students' attainment, progress and outcomes
- Be aware of students' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- Guide students to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this impacts on teaching
- Encourage students to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study

S1.3 Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

For example, teachers will

- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain students' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject

S1.4 Plan and teach well-structured lessons

For example, teachers will

- Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- Promote a love of learning and young people's intellectual curiosity
- Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding students have acquired
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum and scheme of work within the relevant subject area(s)

S1.5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students

For example, teachers will

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable students to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit students' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of young people, and know how to adapt to teaching to support students' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them

S1.6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment

For example, teachers will

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- Make use of formative and summative assessment to secure students' progress
- Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- Give students regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage students to respond to the feedback

S1.7 Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

For example, teachers will

- Have clear expectations and routines for behaviour in classrooms and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the college in accordance with appropriate college policies
- Manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to students' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- Maintain good relationships with students, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary

These standards will be evidenced by Observation records and any other documentation as appropriate e.g. CPD records, Individual Learning Plans, tracking and target setting documentation, schemes of work, lesson plans, student perception surveys etc.

Standard 2 – Professional Characteristics

A teachers is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of professional and personal conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for professional responsibilities and conduct throughout a teacher's career.

S2.1 Professional Responsibilities

- Make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the college
- Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- Deploy support staff effectively
- Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues

- Communicate effectively with parents/carers with regard to students' achievements and well-being

S2.2 Personal and Professional Conduct

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside college, by:

- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- Having regard for the need to safeguard students well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the college in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the contractual frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

This standard will be evidenced by a statement of compliance by the teacher and endorsed by the appraiser/line manager on a default model i.e. evidence will only be required where there is a potential issues over that standard.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

This Code of Professional Practice was developed for the sector in 2008 and is still utilised by the College to guide our employees regarding their practice. **The Code was developed by the profession for the profession** and it outlines the behaviours expected of members – for the benefit of students, employers, the profession and the wider community.

Behaviour 1: Professional integrity

The members shall;

1. Meet their professional responsibilities consistent with the Institute's professional values
2. Use reasonable professional judgement when discharging differing responsibilities and obligations to students, colleagues, institution and the wider profession
3. Uphold the reputation of the profession by never unjustly or knowingly damaging the professional reputation of another or furthering their own position unfairly at the expense of another
4. Comply with all reasonable assessment and quality procedures and obligations
5. Uphold the standing and reputation of the Institute and not knowingly undermine or misrepresent its views nor their Institute membership, any qualification or professional status

Behaviour 2: Respect

The members shall at all times:

1. Respect the rights of students and colleagues in accordance with relevant legislation and organisation requirements
2. Act in a manner which recognises diversity as an asset and does not discriminate in respect of race, gender, disability and/or learning difficulty, age, sexual orientation or religion and belief.

Behaviour 3: Reasonable care

The members shall take reasonable care to ensure the safety and welfare of students and comply with relevant statutory provisions to support their well-being and development.

Behaviour 4: Professional practice

The members shall provide evidence to the Institute that they have complied with the current Institute CPD policy and guidelines.

Behaviour 5: Criminal offence disclosure

Any member shall notify the Institute as soon as practicable after cautioning or conviction for a criminal offence. The Institute reserves the right to act on such information through its disciplinary process.

Behaviour 6: Responsibility during Institute investigations

A member shall use their best endeavours to assist in any investigation and shall not seek to dissuade, penalise or discourage a person from bringing a complaint against any member, interfere with or otherwise compromise due process.

Behaviour 7: Responsibility to the Institute

The members shall at all times act in accordance with the Institute's conditions of membership which will be subject to change from time to time.

Advice to all employees (including Senior Management) of Shrewsbury Colleges Group in dealing with the Media

The “media” includes newspapers, radio, television (terrestrial, satellite and digital), magazines and websites.

The most important point to remember is that you must not communicate with the media on behalf of Shrewsbury Colleges Group on issues relevant to your work unless authorised to do so by the Principal – whether you wish to work with the media or whether the media contacts you.

You should always be aware that the media can give a negative slant even to something which appears harmless or positive. You should note too that, if your involvement in something is personal, if the media covers it and reports you as working for Shrewsbury Colleges Group, you have a responsibility to inform your employers by informing the Principal.

You must obtain permission from the Principal & CEO before you:

- Contribute to any media interview or broadcast in your capacity as an employee of Shrewsbury Colleges Group.
- Speak and/or write to the media about any official information which comes into your possession.
- Publish (in whatever form) outside the Group, any letter or statement relating to the Group's business.
- Publish, or assist in publishing, any articles or other material that you have produced as part of your official duties.

You must avoid making statements that could compromise confidentiality and undermine the work of the Group. These will be regarded as a breach of contract and may lead to disciplinary action. The same rule applies whether or not the basic facts about the situation are in the public domain.

The media contacting you:

If the media contacts you, do not be drawn into any conversation.

Confidentiality and union representatives:

Special rules on confidentiality apply if you are an elected national, regional, branch or Group representative of a recognised union.

The Group believes that:

As a union representative:

- You do not need to get permission before publishing **your union's views** on matters that directly affect the conditions of service of your members, except where your official duties are directly concerned with the matters in question
- You must ensure that it is made clear that any views you express are those of your union, not of the Group.
- In public discussion about pay or conditions you must avoid being drawn into disclosing, even in general terms, any information obtained from official sources.
- All other rules on confidentiality apply to you in the same way as for everyone else.

These special arrangements for union representatives will not apply where, during an interview or in an article, the representative concerned specifically refers to their position with the Group. In these circumstances the normal arrangements for seeking prior approval for clearing the text will apply.

Regional union representatives suggested that Group union representatives should contact their regional representative for clarification.