Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
UNITED WORLD COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

UWC values:

- International and intercultural understanding
- Celebration of difference
- Personal responsibility and integrity
- Mutual responsibility and respect
- Compassion and service
- Respect for the environment
- A sense of idealism
- Personal challenge
- Action and personal example
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: UWC Costa Rica

1. Policy Statement

United World College Costa Rica is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our students. The College expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment by demonstrating their understanding of how each adult working on behalf of the school has an active part to play in protecting students from harm and promoting their welfare.

All staff at UWC Costa Rica should adopt an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ concerning safeguarding and child protection. UWC Costa Rica cultivates a climate where everyone should feel comfortable to speak about these matters openly.

When concerned about the welfare of a student, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

2. Introduction

UWC Costa Rica takes the College's duty very seriously towards all students entrusted to its care and seeks to provide a residential and educational environment in which all students are safe, secure, valued, respected, and listened to, consistent with the IB Learner Profile.

The term ‘safeguarding’ is understood to mean that the College will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of any harm to students' welfare is minimized. The College understands that where any concerns about a student's welfare exist, appropriate action will be taken to address those concerns by working in full partnership with other agencies/services where relevant.

Our work in safeguarding and protecting students must always have regard for the relevant guidance issued by the College's accrediting agency, CIS, the Standards for Child Protection published by the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
(ICMEC); and the laws of Costa Rica.

Our procedures outlined in this policy and supporting policies (see appendix 1) will be followed by all adults, including volunteers, working with or on behalf of UWC Costa Rica.

3. Keeping children safe

UWC Costa Rica has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. The College does this by:

- Promoting a caring, safe, and positive environment within the UWC Costa Rica community.

- Ensuring that staff, Board members, and volunteers are appropriately trained in safeguarding and child protection according to their role and responsibilities within the college community.

- Encouraging the self-esteem and self-assertiveness of all students through the curriculum so that students themselves become aware of danger and risk and what is acceptable behavior and what is not.

- Understanding how to identify students who may be at risk of radicalization and how to support them.

- Working in partnership with all other services and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

- Working closely with the College’s external contractors on safeguarding and site security, including secure management of the campus entrance.

- Displaying age developmentally appropriate posters that detail contact details for child protection helplines and support.

- Always following safer recruitment procedures when appointing staff or
volunteers to work in or with our organization.

- Taking all reasonable practical steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances permit and welcoming visitors safely and securely
- Operating robust and sensible health and safety procedures and undertaking the required risk assessments when planning out school activities or trips.
- Ensuring that any community groups that use our facilities to provide services to children operate appropriate child protection procedures.
- Giving all staff the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and safeguarding policy.

4. Managing Safeguarding

All staff must be clear about their role and others in providing a caring and safe environment for all students. All staff must know how they should respond to any concerns about an individual student that may arise.

To this end, UWC Costa Rica will ensure that all staff (whether permanent or temporary) and volunteers know to refer to the Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head). It is the responsibility of the school safeguarding committee to designate staff to fill the following roles and ensure they are sufficiently trained to carry out their functions effectively:

(1) Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head Abedeen Remtulla), (2) Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Residential Life Director Leila Mata), and (3) Board Designated Safeguarding Lead (Laurie Frank).

The membership of the UWC Costa Rica Safeguarding Committee is:

- Abedeen Remtulla – Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head)
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- Leila Mata – Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Director Residential Life)
- Vanessa Cespedes (HR Coordinator)
- Designated staff member(s) (to be selected in September)

5. Staff Training

All staff is made aware, during their induction period (and regularly after that), of the systems in place at UWC Costa Rica which support safeguarding, including:

- Children Safe in Education: Safeguarding Information for all School Staff (September 2016) (Appendix 2).
- Know what to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners (Appendix 3).
- Know who are the members of the UWC Costa Rica Safeguarding Committee / Designated Safeguarding Leads and Board Safeguarding Leads.

All staff must sign a document confirming that they have been made aware of, have read, and understand the above information.

All members of the Safeguarding Committee have completed Child Protection Training.

All staff will participate in a training program that will ensure an adequate understanding of signs of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior.

6. Recognition of abuse

All staff must be alert to any possible indicators that a child is suffering harm and report any concerns to the College safeguarding committee chair.
Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse, for example, beating or punching; domestic violence; gangs and youth violence; gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Emotional abuse, for example, rejection and denial of affection.
- Sexual abuse, for example, sexual assault, child sexual exploitation, or encouraging a child to view pornographic material.
- Neglect, for example, failure to provide appropriate care, including warmth or medical attention.
- Cyber abuse linked particularly to emotional and sexual abuse, for example, sexting.
- Honour based violence (HBV), including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
- Faith abuse arising from religion or superstition
- Peer to peer abuse (i.e., a student abusing another student)

Signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- The student says they have been abused (direct disclosure) or asks a question that gives rise to that inference (indirect inference)
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student’s injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been several injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries
- The student’s behavior is atypical or stands out from the group
- There is a sudden negative change in the student’s behavior
- The student asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons
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- The student’s development is delayed
- The students gain or lose weight
- The student appears neglected, e.g., dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed
- The student is reluctant to go home or has been openly rejected by their parents or carers
- Attendance and attitude to learning deteriorates

UWC Costa Rica recognizes that students with special educational needs can face additional safeguarding challenges and face communication barriers and difficulties.

**Staff is reminded never to assume possible indicators of abuse or dismiss an indicator without going further exploration.**

**Protecting against radicalization**

Radicalization refers to the process by which a person comes to support forms of extremism. Protecting students from the risk of radicalization is considered part of UWC Costa Rica’s broader safeguarding duties and is similar to protecting students from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalization, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people from being radicalized.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in students’ behavior, indicating that they may need help or protection.

In relation to radicalisation UWC Costa Rica will:

- Assess the risk of students being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology
- Ensure that students are safe from terrorist and extremist material when online in school, through filtering and teaching students about online safety in general.
● Build students’ resilience to radicalization through the College wellness program.

7. Teaching safeguarding

UWC Costa Rica students are taught about safeguarding through the Wellness program, delivered by the psychologists and coordinators of the Residential Life Program. The Wellness program will cover knowing appropriate boundaries, raise and express concerns, and explain levels of confidentiality. The program will also tackle specific forms of harm and abuse such as peer on peer abuse, FGM, and radicalization. The Sexual Misconduct Policy will outline protocols concerning student-to-student sexual misconduct.

8. Responding to concerns about a student

All students must place their trust and confidence in any adult working in or with the school in a paid or voluntary capacity. They must feel sure that they can speak about any worries or concerns they may have and that they will be listened to, taken seriously, and responded to appropriately. Therefore, all staff must know what to do if a child chooses to talk to them about any matter that raises child protection concerns.

All staff must:

● Listen to what the student is saying without interruption and without asking leading questions.

● Respect the students’ right to privacy but not promise confidentiality.

● Reassure the student they have done the right thing by making a disclosure

● Explain to the student that, to keep them safe from harm, the information that has been shared must be passed on

● The report has been disclosed to the school safeguarding committee chair as soon as possible Record, as soon as practicable, what was said using the
student’s exact words, including the time and place of the conservation, what was done by whom and in whose presence Sign and date the record and keep it secure, handing it to the school safeguarding committee chair as soon as possible.

The chair of the school safeguarding committee (or any other committee member they designate) will:

- Coordinate response to any urgent medical needs of the child
- Consider whether the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm
- Confirm whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff

9. Concerns and allegations against staff, volunteers, and students

UWC Costa Rica has clearly defined procedures for dealing with concerns and allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children. These aim to balance the need to protect students from abuse and protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are based on the U.K. DfE guidance published in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 4: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff) (September 2016) and should be used where the member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student or may have harmed a student.

- Possibly committed a criminal offense against or related to a student

- Behaved towards a student(s) in a way that indicates they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Where an allegation is made against any member of staff (including members of the school safeguarding committee) or a volunteer, the matter should be reported
to the chair of the school safeguarding committee, who will inform the Head of School.

The person must report the allegation to the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee AND the Board Chair without first notifying the Head of School. In conjunction with the school safeguarding committee, the board chair will be responsible for deciding how to proceed.

The allegation is made against the chair of the school safeguarding committee, the Head of School in conjunction with the Board Chair, and other members of the school safeguarding committee, who will deal with the allegation following standard procedures.

10. Whistleblowing:

All staff is required to report any concern or allegation about school practices or the behavior of colleagues that are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm, as well as more general concerns which may not immediately seem ‘serious’ enough to constitute a formal ‘allegation.’

There will be no retribution or disciplinary action against a staff member for making such a report, provided it is done in good faith.

11. Reporting Protocols:

A report must be done in writing (electronically) to the chair and the deputy chair of the Safeguarding Committee. A report can be made in a written statement or be given via email. Complaints should clearly and concisely describe the events of the incident(s) in question in narrative format, including when and where it happened, ad any witnesses. The complaint should also reference any supporting documentation that the complainant may have available to them. The individual submitting the report can ask for confidentiality during the investigative stage.
However, suppose an action is taken to ensure the safety of the student. In that case, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (legal rights of the accused and the student's safety may result in the name of the individual doing the reporting being shared with appropriate personnel/authorities).

12. Records

Reported matters:

No one person within a school can be expected to have a complete picture of a student’s circumstances. As a school, UWC Costa Rica recognizes this and is developing a single, comprehensive, detailed, accurate, and secure system of reported matters to be maintained and monitored by the school safeguarding committee to enable patterns to be spotted.

Student information records:

UWC Costa Rica recognizes the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about students and will ask parents/guardians and NCs to provide the following information and to notify the school of any changes:

- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Medical and other needs
- Other factors or reports which may impact the safety and welfare of the student

13. Adults working with children: Safer Recruitment

UWC Costa Rica practices Safer Recruitment practices by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organization) to
work with young people.

Critical points of UWC Costa Rica’s recruitment policy are summarised below. Please see UWC Costa Rica Recruitment Policy and Procedures for complete details.

External groups use the UWC Costa Rica campus for various summer and UWC short courses. All organizations using our campus and working with young people are required to provide UWC Costa Rica with written assurances that safeguarding background checks for supervising adults have been undertaken along with overseas police checks where needed.

All other adults who may occasionally work at or visit the campus and have any access to students are supervised at all times.


Please refer to the UWC CR Code of Professional Ethics for more information.

Students are still presumed under the care of UWC Costa Rica while they have a formal relationship with the College (First and Second Years). Try to ensure you are not having meetings alone with one student.

- Avoid inviting individual students to your homes
- Avoid seeing students in private and isolated situations
- Conduct meetings in public areas
- Keep door and curtains open if possible
- Avoid exchanging notes, comments, or e-mails of a very personal nature
- Avoid giving personal gifts to individual students
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- Not have a romantic relationship
- Not have physical contact or make comments that can be construed as sexual in nature.
- When sleeping off-campus, never share a room with one student only
- Report if a student expresses a romantic intention.

Guidelines for interactions with recent graduates (‘Third Years’):

Staff should be aware that many third-year students still have a formal or informal relationship with the school. Staff should endeavor to follow the best practices listed above for Third Years, specifically those who still have a relationship with the school.

15. Information of Peer to Peer Sexual Misconduct

Every staff member should ensure the safety of all students. If a staff member is aware of peer-to-peer sexual misconduct, it is the duty to report this to the Deputy Head or the Residential Life Director. This report cannot be anonymous. Please refer to the Sexual Misconduct Procedures document.

16. Investigation and resolution:

Once a report has been made, the school will investigate with the advice of legal counsel. If criminal activity is suspected (please refer to the summary of the Costa Rican Criminal Code below), police may be informed and conduct a parallel investigation. At times, an external investigator may be requested. If deemed that there may be the possibility of a safety risk to students, the subject of the investigation may be suspended from the school until the study is complete. Due to privacy laws and possible criminal proceedings, information of progress or resolution may or may not be shared with others (the advice of legal counsel will be
17. Monitoring and review

The school safeguarding committee continually monitors the school's child protection and safeguarding practices and brings the board and Management Team any weaknesses or deficiencies. Through the Head and Deputy Head, the board must remedy any flaws that are identified without delay.

An annual report is submitted to the Board that outlines the child protection and safeguarding work that has been undertaken during the previous academic year. Included in the report are details of:

- The names of staff with designated child protection responsibilities
- Confirmation that all new staff and volunteers have been recruited safely and that a record of all staff vetting checks is up to date and complete
- Necessary training has been completed by designated staff involved in safeguarding and child protection
- The training that has been terminated by all other staff and volunteers
- Details of any significant incidents
- Details of information and guidance that has been given to staff
- Details of safeguarding and child protection issues included in the Wellness Program
- Details of safeguarding and child protection information given to parents
Footnote 1:

**Child Protection under the Costa Rican Criminal Code**

The following acts can be considered as criminal and will be referred to local authorities (Please refer to the Costa Rican Criminal Code for specific details):

1. Rape:
   a. Consists of accessing (penetration) orally, anally or vaginally, in the following cases: 2. When the victim is under thirteen - even with consent.
   b. When you take advantage of the victim’s vulnerability, or it is found unable to resist.
   c. When body violence or intimidation is used.

2. Sexual relations with minors (under 18):

   Consists of accessing (penetration) orally, anally or vaginally, with a minor, provided that it does not constitute a crime of rape, in the following cases:

   a. When the victim is over thirteen and under fifteen years of age, the author is five or more years old.
   b. When the victim is older than fifteen, and under eighteen, the author is seven or more years old.
   c. If the author has, as regards the victim, the status of governing, uncle, aunt, brother or sister, cousin or cousin by consanguinity or affinity, whether a guardian or is in a position of trust or authority regarding the victim or his family, whether or not they are related to each other.

3. Paid sexual acts with minors: Anyone who pays promises to pay or give in return economic or other advantages to a minor or a third party so that the minor can perform sexual or erotic acts
4. Sexual abuse against minors: In this case, the offender abusively performs acts for sexual purposes against a minor or obliges them to serve them to the agent, himself, or another person, provided that it does not constitute a crime of violation.

5. Sexual abuse against persons of legal age: In this case, the offender abusively performs acts for sexual purposes against a person of legal age or obliges them to perform them to the agent, himself, or another person, provided that it does not constitute a crime of rape.

Appendices:

1. List of related policies and supporting documentation

2. Keeping Children Safe in Education: Safeguarding Information for all School Staff (September 2016)

3. What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners

Appendix 1:

- UWC CR Staff Code of Professional Ethics
- Regulations and Internal Procedures for Handling Sexual Misconduct Cases
- UWC CR Recruitment Policy
- UWC CR Visitor Policy
- UWC CR Student Code of Conduct

Appendix 2:

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Safeguarding Information for all
Appendix 3:

What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners