



Joint Council for  
Qualifications

**Principles for safeguarding children and  
vulnerable adults**

**Revised – Autumn 2017**



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# Introduction

## Specific principles of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults

**Specific principles of safeguarding provide a benchmark of good practice. They raise awareness and help organisations know what they need to do to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and to minimise avoidable risks.** These principles are designed to help safeguard children and vulnerable adults taking assessments offered by members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They also ensure that awarding bodies take positive action in response to safeguarding concerns identified in the course of their work.

This document contains the nine standards of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults that the JCQ awarding bodies have agreed to adopt. They are based on current Government guidance. An awarding body may choose to have additional processes which suit their specific circumstances.

### **This document is for:**

These principles have been adopted by the JCQ awarding bodies. They should be read and implemented by staff in the awarding bodies, particularly those who have overall responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Centres may also find it useful to read this document to understand how the awarding bodies have developed their procedures.

This document is not intended to ensure the JCQ awarding bodies' compliance with the relevant safeguarding and Prevent legislation. It is intended to provide guidance as to the matters to be considered by awarding bodies in their relevant policies and procedures.

### **Who are the awarding bodies?**

The JCQ consists of seven awarding bodies

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- City & Guilds
- Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- WJEC

They work together to develop common standards, regulations and guidance for examinations and assessments across the UK. These policy standards are a part of this continuing strand of work.

## Roles and responsibilities

### What do awarding bodies do?

**The main aim of awarding bodies is to provide qualifications and support to meet the needs of individuals and society.** In delivering these products and services, the awarding bodies have a role in ensuring the welfare of candidates taking their assessments.

Behind each certificate issued there are a number of activities, products and services that are key to the delivery of courses and ultimately to candidates achieving their certificates. Some of these activities are undertaken by permanent staff employed by awarding bodies; others by people who are contracted in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this policy, those who are contracted, and not permanently employed by awarding bodies, are referred to as 'representatives'.

**There are three key areas in which safeguarding issues may be raised in relation to the work of awarding bodies:**

- the conduct of awarding body permanent staff or representatives towards candidates, other children and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact, whether in person or on-line;
- the appropriateness of assessment materials;
- candidate disclosure of information regarding their personal welfare, or the welfare of one of their peers, to the permanent staff or representative of the awarding body, whether directly or through written responses or on social media.

It is the responsibility of the awarding body to ensure that all its permanent staff and representatives are aware of safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults, and procedures in their particular area of expertise and are trained accordingly. The awarding body must have effective mechanisms in place to record and monitor safeguarding issues and ensure that appropriate action is taken.

**Cases not relating to the conduct of a member of permanent staff or representative** will involve formal reporting to the centre and/or the relevant protection authority for resolution. In these cases the awarding body must be satisfied that the issues have been acknowledged and will ask for confirmation of this from the organisation to which the referral was made.

**Cases involving the conduct of awarding body permanent staff** will be formally investigated and dealt with in line with the documented disciplinary procedures, including discussion with the appropriate protection authorities if appropriate.

**Cases involving the conduct of awarding body representatives** will also be formally investigated, including discussion with the appropriate statutory protection authorities if appropriate, and dealt with in line with the terms and conditions of their contracts.

## Roles and responsibilities

### What do centres do?

**A centre is the place where a candidate will undertake study, training and assessment.**

Awarding bodies are very conscious of safeguarding issues and will do all within their remit to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. However, as centres have more direct contact with candidates, they have primary responsibility for the welfare of their candidates, progressing and resolving issues and raising awareness generally.

Awarding bodies and centres communicate directly with one another on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the contractual relationship which results in candidates taking assessments is between an awarding body and a centre. **There is no direct contractual relationship between an awarding body and a candidate or group of candidates (except in the case of SQA, when certificates are issued directly to candidates).**

To maximise the effectiveness of all measures to protect children and vulnerable adults taking qualifications, it is vital that awarding bodies work in partnership with centres. This will ensure a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.

The roles and responsibilities of centres **in England** are defined in:

*Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges* (Department for Education, September 2016) **and** *Keeping children safe in education for school and college staff* (part 1)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

The roles and responsibilities of centres **in Wales** are defined in *Keeping Learners Safe*

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/keeping-learners-safe/?lang=en>

The roles and responsibilities of centres **in Northern Ireland** are defined in the Department of Education's Publications on General Child Protection Issues –

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/child-protection-safeguarding/publications-and-guidance-for-schools.htm>

## Who is defined as a child?

A child is any person who has not reached the age of 18.

## What is child abuse?

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Child abuse is physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse.

Further information may be found in the DfE document *Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance*.

## What is Prevent?

Prevent is the Government initiative that protects children from the risk of radicalisation and should be seen as part of the wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

## Relevant legislation and guidance

There are several pieces of legislation and guidance that are relevant to the work of the awarding bodies in respect of safeguarding children:

- Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) - [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)
- Prevent strategy - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf)
- The Children Acts and relevant guidance when working in schools, examination centres or otherwise with children – see the Department for Education's website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education> Please note that while the provisions of the Children Acts do not directly apply to awarding bodies, they do form part of the Government's wider safeguarding framework for children. Accordingly, it is important for awarding bodies to be aware of the overall scheme of those Acts and related guidance.
- **Wales only** – Information on Safeguarding legislation and guidance in Wales can be found on the Welsh Government website: <http://gov.wales/topics/health/socialcare/safeguarding/?lang=en> and Learning Wales: <http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/keeping-learners-safe/?lang=en>
- **Northern Ireland only** – Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

## Who is defined as a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is aged eighteen years or over to whom a 'regulated activity' relating to vulnerable adults (as set out in the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) is provided.

## What is 'regulated activity'?

'Regulated activity' is a broad term which applies differently to children and to vulnerable adults. It is likely to include:

- specified activities relating to children and vulnerable adults (e.g. teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision) which are carried out on a frequent (as a general rule at least once a week), or intensive (more than three days in any 30 day period) basis, or overnight (between 2am and 6am where the activity gives the person the opportunity to have face-to-face contact with children or vulnerable adults); **or**
- certain work in a specified place which provides the opportunity for frequent contact with children or vulnerable adults (e.g. a school); **or**
- advice or guidance, which is provided wholly or mainly for children and which relates to their physical, emotional or educational well-being; **or**
- certain specified positions (e.g. a school governor) and functions (e.g. early years child minding).

An activity is unlikely to be a 'regulated activity' if it is supervised.

Awarding body employees, and those acting as associates or representatives of an awarding body, should not engage in 'regulated activity' as they **must not** be left unaccompanied with candidates.

The centre **must** always ensure that a responsible adult accompanies awarding body personnel, including associates and representatives, at all times.

## Specific principles of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults

The awarding bodies have examined their working environments (including who they work with and how, when, where and under what circumstances permanent staff or representatives work with candidates and interact with them) and the products and services they offer.

The nine principles which follow are recognised as essential steps in developing a safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults. The principles are organised in this document in the order in which they should be addressed.

The overall quality of a safeguarding policy is dependent on it being:

- well-implemented;
- well-operated; and
- well-managed.

### **Principle 1      A safeguarding policy**

An awarding body will have a safeguarding policy in place.

### **Principle 2      Procedures and systems**

An awarding body will have clearly defined reporting procedures and response mechanisms that ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met. This will include a designated Safeguarding Officer. At the same time, so far as this is possible given those safeguarding responsibilities, an awarding body will ensure that obligations of confidentiality (re-assuring all concerned that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately) are respected.

### **Principle 3      Prevention**

An awarding body will adopt measures to minimise the risk of abuse by any person it retains to engage in any activity in relation to its qualifications.

### **Principle 4      Codes of behaviour**

An awarding body will have in place *Codes of behaviour* that set out acceptable standards of behaviour and good practice for staff and representatives.

### **Principle 5      Implementation**

An awarding body will give clear guidance to permanent staff and representatives on how the safeguarding policy will be adapted and applied.



**Principle 6      Equality and inclusion**

In accordance with equality legislation, in the exercise of its function of developing and awarding qualifications, an awarding body must have due regard to the need to combat discrimination and ensure procedures are equitably applied to all children and vulnerable adults.

**Principle 7      Communication**

An awarding body will make their safeguarding policy publicly available. The policy will be regularly reviewed, taking into account comments from appropriate stakeholders.

**Principle 8      Education and training**

An awarding body will provide appropriate initial and refresher training and development opportunities to staff and representatives.

**Principle 9      Implementation and monitoring**

An awarding body will monitor the implementation of their safeguarding policy.

## **Summary**

In conclusion, these nine principles attempt to ensure that awarding bodies can develop and promote practice which safeguards children and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. They additionally seek to meet regulatory and legislative requirements.

These principles of safeguarding are the responsibility of the designated staff within the awarding bodies. The JCQ will ensure that these specialists review the principles every three years and/or whenever there is a significant change in the awarding body or in relevant protection legislation, policy or guidance.