

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

At the heart of the Faith Centre's mission is the desire that all staff and students at LSE flourish in all aspects of their lives, including their religious and spiritual identities. It is, therefore, of high importance to us that every precaution should be in place to prevent abuse of any kind, including those that can take place in religious settings. We do not wish to interfere in individual's private spiritual journeys, but we seek to take responsibility for the religious gatherings that we host and the programmes that we run. This policy furthers this end.

This policy and procedures have been compiled in conjunction with [LSE Ethics Code](#) and [LSE Safeguarding Policy](#) which stipulates that: "All areas of the School with regular or occasional contact with vulnerable groups are obligated to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to operationalise this policy, and that these are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure the content of this policy is continually reflected upon, delivered and maintained. These areas of the School must ensure that all staff in their area are made aware of this policy, and that they receive appropriate training." (3.3)

The LSE Safeguarding Policy pertains to vulnerable groups which are defined as follows:

"A 'child' is defined as a person under 18 years of age: where the context specifically relates to older children, the term 'young person' is used. A 'vulnerable adult' is broadly defined as someone aged 18 or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation either temporarily or permanently." (2.2)

The Faith Centre recognises its responsibility to the whole community who may, at a particular time, need to be protected from exploitation whether that be financial, sexual, criminal, extremist or political ends, emotional abuse, domestic abuse, or grooming.

The areas covered are:

1. **Faith Centre front line** – being equipped to respond to visitors to the Faith Centre presenting with significant pastoral or safeguarding concerns.
2. **One on one encounters** that may occur in pastoral situations or in the course of Faith Centre programmes.
3. Safeguarding requirements and expectations of **associate chaplains**.
4. Safeguarding requirements and expectations of **external speakers and organisations** involved in any Faith Centre bookings.
5. **Specific disclosures of abuse** to any team members.

1. Faith Centre Front Line – Responding to immediate situations

Most members of the team spend time in the reception area or Centre Manager's Office. This means they may be the first point of contact for someone seeking support or refuge. Staff members, who are frequently in the Faith Centre alone, must be prepared to act when a student is in need of immediate support, or the disclosure of a safeguarding concern arises.

To prepare for this, staff members must ensure they are familiar with LSE procedures such as the [Cause for Concern](#) and [Safe Contacts](#). The Centre Manager is responsible for organising regular training to ensure all staff are supported and informed. Staff members should reach out to the Centre Manager and/or Director, who are the Designated Safeguarding Leads, for additional support or troubleshooting.

Staff members may respond to situations differently, and staff members should not feel like they have to do anything they feel unable or uncomfortable to do.

The following responses are suggestions and steps that staff members may wish to take.

- Ask the student if they would like to move to a private space and take them into the Desert Room (to sit at the tables in front of the windows) or into the Manager's Office.
- You may want to offer comfort but refrain from inappropriate touching (i.e., hugging or touching legs).
- If you feel you need support to deal with the situation, inform the student that you will be calling a colleague to join.
- If you feel that it would be better for a member of staff who shares the student's faith background or gender identity to be present, ask the student if they would like this.
- In the Manager's office is a printed Cause for Concern flowchart, you may want to refer to this and decide next steps with the student.
- If the student wishes to disclose or report an incident of abuse, assault or poor practice, follow the steps in section 5 of this document or inform the student that you are unable to support but that you will contact a member of staff who can support this.
- Do not force the student to share details they are uncomfortable with, but you may wish to ask clarifying questions in order to make an informed decision on next steps.
- Make a note of what the student is saying in their own words as soon as practical.
- Ask the student to share their name and email so you can follow up with them or introduce them to relevant services.
- If the student does not want to report the incident, and it does not present as an ongoing concern or if the student is not in immediate danger, advise them that you would like to report it through the [STOP IT website](#).
- If matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of the student, contact security.

2. One on One Encounters

There may be cases when a student asks for a one-on-one meeting, this may be to discuss academic life, for career advice, to ask for pastoral support or to share a wellbeing or safety concern. Whenever possible these meetings should take place in publicly visible setting or the Desert Room or the Centre Manager's Office.

Pre-arranged meeting should be added to your work calendar, and you may wish to inform your line manager of a meeting. If you are aware that the student you are meeting is distressed or in need of support, it is encouraged that the Centre Manager or Director is informed of this so the member of staff can be supported through the process.

During leadership programmes, conferences and trips, students may form friendships with team members. It is important to ensure that all communication is undertaken on work emails or via the team mobile.

All Faith Centre staff must follow [LSE Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships](#).

3. Associate Chaplains

Associate Chaplains are provided by religious groups which comply with [LSE Policy on Engagement with External Religious Organisations](#). This stipulates that they should be "a registered charity, demonstrating good governance and regulated by the UK Charities Commission. The charity should have appropriate safeguarding, health and safety, whistleblowing, safer recruitment and a complaints policy."

Associate Chaplains exist outside of LSE's staff structure and therefore are trained in safeguarding by their respective religious groups and must follow their policy and procedures. The Faith Centre Manager will need to see an up-to-date DBS check every three years.

Disclosure of safeguarding incidents to Associate Chaplains are to be shared with the Faith Centre at their judgement.

4. External Speakers and Organisations

Most Desert Room bookings are made by LSESU societies, and the SU is the legal entity required to ensure that their activities follow appropriate procedures. Nonetheless, the Faith Centre hosts their activities and should not be blind to its liabilities. Many of these societies work with external organisations such as the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, the University and Colleges Christian Fellowship, the National Hindu Students Forum and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster.

External organisations who regularly lead, facilitate or fund the activities of student groups must comply with [LSE Policy on Engagement with External Religious Organisations](#). LSE Faith Centre must see the organisation's safeguarding policy before allowing them to use

our spaces. In addition, we may ask for the organisation's charity/company registration and conduct further due diligence research.

The Faith Centre may ask for the details of external speakers being invited to the Faith Centre and will consult the LSESU if we believe external speakers are in breach of the [LSESU External Speaker Policy](#).

5. Specific Disclosures of Abuse

Anyone involved in LSE Faith Centre's activities has a responsibility and duty to act if they have a safeguarding concern about a participant or concerns relating to the behaviour of another member of staff (see [LSE Whistleblowing Policy](#)), in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a student.

What to do if a student discloses information directly to you about abuse or harm that they are experiencing, or have experienced (in person/on the phone/via email)

- Remain calm and support the student, reassuring them it is right thing to tell someone and what has happened is not their fault.
- Make it clear that you cannot keep this information a secret, but you will only pass it on to those people who need to know in order to help you.
- Listen carefully and supportively, without interruption, and try not to be visibly shocked or angry at what you are being told.
- It is not your job to investigate or verify what is being said or examine the student. It is important you allow the student to speak openly without expressing any judgement as to the information they are sharing.

Immediate action to take:

- Always offer reassurance, listen to, and take seriously, what they are saying
- Ensure you have clarified your understanding if needed. For example, you can ask open questions to get some more context, or you could summarise and repeat back to the student what they have said using their own words if needed. It is important that you do not ask leading questions.
- Explain to the student that you will now need to make a report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; you cannot make any promises on what will happen as a result of this reporting but can reassure the student that we are here to support them.
- Consult immediately with the Centre Manager or Director and share the information that has been disclosed to you.
- Make a full and accurate record of the conversation, including the words they used where possible, as soon as you can, using the [Faith Centre Safeguarding Reporting Form](#)

What to do if you have any concerns about the safety, wellbeing, conduct or behaviour of a student, but there hasn't been a direct disclosure to you

Examples might include:

- Hints about abuse / harm or concerning language being used in discussions
- Observing self-harm marks, bruising, burns or other injuries
- Concerns about someone's mental health or wellbeing
- Observing sudden changes or unexpected behaviour, e.g., a participant becomes very withdrawn
- Observing serious aggression or inappropriate behaviour towards others

Immediate actions to take:

- It is not your job to investigate the allegation or concern, and you should not discuss this with the individual concerned or anyone else.
- You should report your concerns to the Centre Manager or Director (Designated Safeguarding Leads).
- If your concern relates to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, you can contact the LSE Safeguarding Lead Officer (the Chief Operating Officer) directly.
- If instructed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead make a full and accurate record of your concerns, using the [Faith Centre Safeguarding Reporting Form](#)

What to do if you have a concern about the conduct or behaviour of a member of staff, or someone makes allegation or complaint about a staff member to you.

A safeguarding allegation is one where information comes to light from any source, which suggests that an adult working for or on behalf of the LSE Faith Centre has or may have caused significant harm to a child or vulnerable adult; committed a criminal offence against a child or adult; or behaved in a way that may call into question their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults. You might also have more general concerns about the behaviour or conduct of an adult engaged in the LSE Faith Centre activities.

Examples:

- A staff member is seen engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a participant, such as by giving gifts or talking about inappropriate topics.
- A participant tells you that one of the other staff members is sending them direct messages that are making them feel uncomfortable.

Immediate action to take:

- It is not your job to investigate the allegation or concern, and you should not discuss this with the individual concerned or anyone else.
- You should report your concerns to the Centre Manager or Director (Designated Safeguarding Leads).

- If your concern relates to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, you can contact the LSE Safeguarding Lead Officer (the Chief Operating Officer) directly.
- Make a full and accurate record of any conversation that has taken place, including the words they used where possible, as soon as you can, using the [Faith Centre Safeguarding Reporting Form](#)