POLICY TITLE	Safeguarding, Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns
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AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS	Yes
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EXCEPTIONS	EHU Medical School policies does not apply to: • MBChB • MBChB with Foundation Year • MSc Physician Associate

FACULTY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND MEDICINE

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON SAFEGUARDING, WHISTLEBLOWING AND
RAISING CONCERNS**

All Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies (PSRBs), and Edge Hill University expect full compliance with all relevant and appropriate code(s) of conduct, ethics and practice. As a result, **_all_** staff, students (UG, PG, PhD, full-time/part-time) and professional/colleagues, working in whatever capacity, have both a moral and a legal obligation to report any actual or perceived breaches of these and all situations where it is felt that someone **_may_** be at risk of harm.

This Code aims to

- encourage staff, students and anyone else acting on behalf of Edge Hill University to raise concerns about possible safeguarding, poor practice, patient safety or anything else they feel has the potential (perceived or actual) to compromise well-being, broadly defined.

- provide appropriate and effective mechanisms to deal with those concerns by signposting/referring to other policies and procedures, and ensure that staff and students are included in the process, receiving appropriate and timely feedback;

This Code is intended to guide the actions of all staff, students and all relevant others who, at any time, and in good faith, have reason to believe they have a legitimate concern, whether this be on EHU premises or on placement or during any business associated with the University or the justifiable practice(s) of their profession, and to re-assure staff, students and other colleagues (however defined) that they will be supported throughout the process and protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure/concern in good faith. It also clarifies the responsibilities of all concerned to ensure that service users/patients/carers/colleagues and the wider public are protected, and that all concerned are appropriately and adequately supported throughout these processes.

This Code of Practice is intended to cover safeguarding issues and a range of other concerns, which may themselves instigate whistleblowing procedures. The range of possible concerns may be quite wide, and some may fall outside the scope of other specific policies and procedures, and may include, but not necessarily be restricted to:

- Concerns regarding the general health, behaviour and well-being of students, staff and others;
- abuse or possible harm <u>to</u> others or <u>by</u> others from whatever source;
- patient/service user safety;
- conduct which is likely to be unprofessional, offensive or a possible breach of the law, including breaches of confidentiality and data protection requirements;
- health and safety risks;
- the inappropriate or unauthorised use of public funds or other resources;

- possible fraud and/or corruption;
- other unethical/improper conduct;
- quality concerns arising from educational/placement audit, CQC, Ofsted or other regulatory body visits, or identified within the context of student work;
- risks that may impact or affect required compliance with relevant PSRB standards for education and training, broadly defined.

❖ **Raising a concern: general information**

All concerns that relate to the well-being or safety of any patient/service user carer, student, member of staff or other colleague (broadly defined) or a member of the public **must** be reported immediately. Where such concerns emanate from within the practice area, these must be reported to the person in charge of the practice area for them to invoke their own procedures. If the concern appears unresolved, then the Faculty procedure for raising a concern should be followed.

If the incident occurs/is raised on Edge Hill University premises, then you should contact, as appropriate, the programme leader for the relevant programme or a member of staff from the programme or, in their absence, please approach staff at the FoHSCM Helpdesk/Reception staff who will direct you.

A completed *Raising a Concern form* should be passed to the programme leader or any member of staff from your programme/department. In the event of a **safeguarding** concern being raised, please refer to the guidance below.

In addition, and in all circumstances, *active* consideration must be given to whether there may be any safeguarding concerns. If so, then appropriate and relevant action(s) MUST be taken (see below).

1. *Raising a Safeguarding concern*

Edge Hill University wishes to adopt the highest standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the health, safety and welfare of children, young people and adults accessing its services and facilities. The University believes that it is unacceptable for a child, a young person or an adult to experience any form of harm or abuse. Their welfare is paramount and they have the right to protection and support.

Safeguarding concerns may arise as a result of activities associated with the University, or a member of staff, student or volunteer acting on behalf of the University may become aware of safeguarding concerns about an individual, which are not related to the University's activities, nor within the University's control.

Safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility. Whilst there are specific lead responsibilities identified within the University, it is vital to state that it is **everyone's** responsibility to safeguard and protect anyone who may be vulnerable, under any and all circumstances.

Any allegation or disclosure involving a child, young person or adult at risk should be reported immediately to one of the Safeguarding Co-Leads for the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine, or in their absence, the programme leader or any member of staff from your programme or any member of EHU staff. In the event that you need to e-mail one of the safeguarding leads, or any member of EHU staff, please use the subject header 'Safeguarding Concern'.

Faculty Co-Leads for Safeguarding: Dr Steve J Hothersall
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Room H222
Telephone: 01695 657331
(Ext 7331)
hotherss@edgehill.ac.uk

James Ridley
Senior Lecturer - Nurse Education
Room H109
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Senior Lecture – Medical Education
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A *Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form* **(see link below**) must be completed, providing as accurate a record as possible of events or reports. However, care must be taken, particularly in the case of disclosures, not to lead or interrogate the individual in a way that could prejudice further action by the relevant authorities. A completed S*afeguarding form* should be passed to one of the Safeguarding co-leads (see above), or, in their absence, any member of staff from your programme.

1a. *Reporting a Safeguarding concern out of hours*

If a Safeguarding issue occurs out of hours (i.e. when the Designated Safeguarding Officers will not be in work) individuals need to consider whether anyone is currently at immediate risk of harm. If they believe anyone to be at immediate risk of harm they should call 999 for the police or ambulance as appropriate and report it immediately. Individuals should also contact Campus Support on **01695 584227** (Internal = 4227) and make a report to them. Campus Support will decide whether it is necessary to contact other senior staff at the University or whether this can wait until the next working day, at which point, the processes and procedures referred to above may well be instigated. If individuals do not believe anyone is at serious risk of harm, then the report should be made to the Faculty Safeguarding Lead(s)/programme staff/Reception staff the next working day, at which point

the processes and procedures referred to above may well be instigated. However it is advisable to keep notes at the time so that these are up to date and available as they will be needed.

1b. The link to the Safeguarding Incident reporting Form can be found here https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/health/PRE06+Safeguarding%2C+Whistleblowing+and+Management+of+Cause+for+Concern

1c. The link to the process of investigation can be found here:
https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/safeguarding/files/2015/08/Flowchart-of-Procedure-For-Reporting-Safeguarding-Concerns-Oct-15.pdf

1d. The University Safeguarding Policy and other relevant information can be found via the following links:
- ✓ https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/safeguarding-policy/
- ✓ https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/health/about/safeguarding/
- ✓ https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/safeguarding/students/
- ✓ https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/safeguarding/links/

We realise that involvement in such matters at any and all levels can be a difficult experience, and wish to reassure everyone (both staff and students) that support is available to you. Please contact either the Faculty Safeguarding leads, your Head of Department, programme/course/module leader or personal academic tutor as appropriate, who will advise/support accordingly.

2. 'Whistleblowing' and Raising a Concern (and see section #3 below)

2a. Introduction

i. The Nolan Committee defines 'whistle-blowing' as *'raising concerns about misconduct within an organisation'*. Complaints procedures may be invoked when you feel that you have cause for complaint on your own account. But 'whistleblowing' is appropriate when you observe behaviour which impinges on others.

ii. All students have a duty to report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory, dishonest or exploitative behaviour or practice. Episodes can occur in either a University, community, NHS or any practice setting.

iii. The 'Whistle-blowing' Code of Practice is designed to provide support and protection to students who might feel vulnerable and impotent in the staff-student context. People attracted to the caring professions might wish to avoid conflict in case it upsets others. But if individuals are being abused or harmed this should take precedence over the risk of upsetting colleagues.

iv. This Code of Practice accompanies the student '**Raising Concerns'** procedure(s) (see below). Where a student is raising a concern about another student, the 'Raising a Concern' Form is the appropriate

procedure. This 'Whistle-blowing' code of practice and the 'Raising a Concern' Form are designed to complement each other.

2b. Examples of concerns that could necessitate 'whistleblowing'

- o Patients/service users/carers/staff/colleagues/volunteers/others [hereafter referred to as 'relevant person(s)'] have not been treated with dignity and respect;
- o A clinician/professional/practitioner/volunteer/carer has made serious or repeated mistakes in aspects of/their practice;
- o A clinician/professional/practitioner/volunteer/carer has not examined/assessed relevant person(s) properly or not responded to reasonable requests for assistance or advice;
- o Information about any other relevant person has been misused;
- o Relevant person(s) have been treated/advised without obtaining their consent or other valid authority;
- o An individual has behaved dishonestly in financial matters, in dealings with any relevant person(s) or in research;
- o An individual has made/inferred sexual/other inappropriate/behaviour(s)/advances towards any relevant persons;
- o An individual has misused alcohol or drugs;
- o A relevant person(s) have been harassed or bullied;
- o An individual has behaved in a racist, sexist or other discriminatory/oppressive manner;
- o A service/agency is not compliant with regulatory requirements/responsibilities or recommendations arising from external monitoring (CQC/Ofsted/GMC/NMC/HCPC/SWE etc)

2c. Action(s) to be taken

In all practice/clinical-based areas there are established systems to report incidents and when you consider that there may be a legitimate cause for concern, it is advisable to use this route. You might then feel able to talk directly to the person(s) concerned, although in your own interests you should ensure that your personal academic tutor is aware that you have taken this course of action.
Initial concerns might well be discussed with:

- o The Practice Education Lecturer (PEL)/Practice Educator (PE)/Work-Based Supervisor/Mentor/PhD or other person acting in a supervisory role;
- o The placement's 'nominated person' (NMC 2018);
- o A Consultant/SHO/Registrar etc;
- o The Service/Team/Practice Manager;
- o A Clinical Director;
- o A Trust Medical Director;
- o A senior member of the team you are allocated to.

If you feel uncomfortable about making contact in this way, you can approach a senior/member of the academic staff here at the University or your personal academic tutor. Please bear in mind that they may not be available all the time and this may not be appropriate/the best course of action if you

perceive a risk of immediate harm. If this is the case, please refer to the information on safeguarding above.

However, if there is no immediate risk of harm or the concern arises in a University context, it would be sensible to discuss the issue with people who are in a position to advise you and who you feel comfortable approaching. If the issue is a minor one, you might then feel able to talk directly to the person(s) concerned; in your own interests you should ensure that your personal academic tutor is aware that you have taken this course of action.

2d. Formal procedure(s)

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this informal approach, or if the issue is a serious one, you should invoke the formal **whistle-blowing procedure** by putting your concerns in writing, initially using the 'Raising a Concern' form.
https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/health/PRE06+Safeguarding%2C+Whistleblowing+and+Management +of+Cause+for+Concern
This should include the background and history of the concern, giving relevant dates, reasons and evidence relating to your concern(s) about the incident(s)/person(s) concerned.

If the Dean/Head of Department/Senior Staff decides that there is, *prima facie*, an indication of malpractice or wrongdoing, an investigation will be arranged and a report made. Alternatively, the matter may be referred to the appropriate agency as circumstances warrant (such as an NHS Trust/Local Authority). This may lead to the matter being referred to the relevant disciplinary processes relating to harassment, complaints, grievance or fitness to practice procedures. It may also be necessary to advise the Police/relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory body.

Acknowledgement will be sent to you within 5 working days with an indication of how the matter will be dealt with.

2e. Important Notes

i. Disclosures which are raised *anonymously* will normally **not be considered** (see note #3). In exceptional circumstances, it may be decided that an anonymous concern is of such a serious nature that it must be investigated. However, anonymity at the reporting stage may compromise the effectiveness of any investigation, so should be avoided whenever possible.

ii. All concerns will be treated in confidence **but we cannot guarantee that the identity of the whistle-blower will not be revealed** at some stage for what will be regarded as necessary reasons. There may be circumstances where the concerns are so significant that the individual whom the student first approaches may feel there is no alternative but to begin formal procedures.

iii. Raising concerns maliciously, recklessly or irresponsibly will be considered to contravene the University Student Agreement and may result in a FTP referral in itself/necessitate contact with the appropriate authorities/employers.

3. Raising a concern (and see #2 above – 'Whistleblowing')

3a. Introduction

In general terms, there is significant overlap between those issues seen as necessitating 'Whistleblowing' (see above) and those causes for concern necessitating action, but that may not, at this stage, represent a significant threat/cause for concern, but which nonetheless have the potential so to do if not identified and managed early.

All professionals, staff, students and anyone else legitimately involved in and on professional programmes, including medicine, have both a moral and a legal duty to raise concerns if they feel that patient/service user safety, dignity or comfort is being compromised, or likely to be so if the concern(s) identified are not attended to/addressed in some way at an early stage.

Similarly, students, and all relevant professionals are required to maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical behaviour at all times. This is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public whilst promoting and maintaining public confidence in the caring professions (broadly defined).

The University has a responsibility to provide a supportive, non-discriminatory environment with excellent teaching and learning.

The University promotes a supportive culture whereby all students can feel able to raise cause for concern(s) about a wide range of issues which can be broadly categorised, but are not limited to:

- The **safety** of a patient/service user/carer/other including Safeguarding concerns (*see above*)
- A student/staff/other relevant person's **health** and/or **behaviour/conduct**, including breaches of **confidentiality/data** usage;
- The **quality/delivery/compliance** of a service/agency

Indeed, all students have a duty to raise concerns which they sincerely believe may impact on (non-inclusively), the safety and the health and wellbeing of all relevant persons, staff and other students, even where these are at what is perceived as a 'low level', as concerns highlighted early may well avoid more serious harm/consequences later on and the need for what many regard as the more 'serious' action/process of safeguarding or 'Whistleblowing' (see above).

This document is intended to clarify the different ways in which students can raise concerns. All students should be aware of the relevant PSRB expectations governing ethics, performance and conduct as they apply to their chosen profession(s).

3b. Raising a concern about the <u>safety</u> of another individual/group

Concerns about the safety of another individual/group **must** be raised immediately with the person in charge of the placement/area. By doing this the individual has discharged his/her responsibility. However, the individual should also inform their Personal Academic Tutor, Practice Education Lead, programme leader or another senior member of the Department/Faculty that a concern has been raised so that it can be logged and investigated further if appropriate.

In cases where there is no immediate threat to safety, or if the concern relates to the individual in charge of the placement area, concern(s) can be raised by speaking to a Personal Academic Tutor, Practice Education Lecturer, programme leader or another senior member of Faculty staff. The academic will take up the concern on behalf of the individual reporting a concern.

In cases where there is no immediate threat to safety, or if the concern relates to the individual in charge of the placement area, nursing and midwifery students should escalate to the placement's nominated person (NMC 2018) or if unresolved escalate to a member of University staff e.g. a Personal Academic Tutor, Practice Education Lecturer, programme leader or another senior member of Faculty staff. The academic will take up the concern on behalf of the individual reporting a concern.

Where any concerns *appear* to be of a serious nature and *could* refer to safeguarding, please see the guidance referred to above. *Anonymous reporting is discouraged* as this may limit investigation of the concern, and such reporting must not be done if there is any immediate threat to safety.

3c. How to raise a concern about student/staff* <u>health</u>, <u>behaviour</u> or <u>conduct</u> including breaches of <u>confidentiality/data</u> usage; [*includes anyone acting on behalf of the University working within a placement/external setting – PEF/PEL/Mentor/PE/Supervisor]

Concerns about student/staff health, behaviour or conduct, including breaches of confidentiality/data breaches may be raised in a number of ways by anyone, including a member of the public, a student, another member of staff or an agency representative:

- By completing the '*Raising a Concern' form* (see above for access to the form)
- By making contact directly or e-mailing or telephoning your personal tutor, the Head of Department or other nominated individual/person connected to the course or placement area concerned.

It is important that anyone who has any concerns about the professionalism, health, wellbeing or conduct of Edge Hill University student's or staff raises these appropriately. The University takes a supportive approach to any concern or complaint raised and will ensure that the person raising a

concern or making a complaint is able to do so without fear of prejudice, following the principles referred to at the start of this Code. The Faculty promotes an open and supportive culture where anyone can raise concerns openly and in safety.

However, anonymous reporting is to be discouraged and raising *false* or *malicious* concerns is a serious offence that may itself lead to investigation and disciplinary action, and whilst we recognise that such concerns may be based on subjective experience, we will always fully acknowledge and investigate every concern raised.

Different policies and procedures may well be utilised to manage concerns, depending on who/what they relate to (for example, the Student Complaints Policy, Staff complaints policy), but the initial completion of this form will assist in directing action(s) appropriately.

3d. Raising a concern regarding the quality/delivery/compliance of a service/agency

See #2 above – 'Whistleblowing'

Students should <u>always</u> consider seeking advice, guidance and support from their Personal Academic Tutor, Student Support Services and/or the Student Union.

July 2019

FACULTY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & MEDICINE

SAFEGUARDING/INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

TO BE COMPLETED IN ALL INSTANCES OF SAFEGUARDING QUERIES/CONCERNS

1. *Date of initial referral:*

2. *Time of initial referral:*

3. *Staff member(s):*

4. *Name of Student(s)/individual(s) concerned [please note all names of those involved/implicated and contact details/whereabouts as known]*

5. *Does the referral relate to concern(s) arising from within the practice area? Y/N (if yes, please give details, and is the placement area aware of them?):*

6. *Name of Mentor/Supervisor/Practice Educator/Personal Tutor (if applicable):*

7. *Nature of concern(s) (Please provide details of those individual(s) involved or to whom concerns relate and their current whereabouts (if known)):*

8. *Description of actions taken/advice given (include contact details of internal/external people/agencies contacted if relevant):*

Signed: *Date:*

Please pass this form to the Faculty Co-Safeguarding Lead or your line manager once completed

For completion by Faculty Co-Safeguarding Lead/other nominated person ONLY

FACULTY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & MEDICINE

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT OUTCOME FORM

1. *Name of referrer and date to which this form refers:*

2. *Outcome of inquiry (please note actions taken/agencies contacted)*

3. *Has the referral been passed to a statutory agency (Local Authority; LSCB; Police; Other)? Y/N?*

   If yes, state who and provide details of contact person.

   If no, state why not and what alternative actions(s) have been undertaken:

4. *Has the student/referrer been advised of the outcome? Y/N – specify, and if no, please state why:*

5. *Is any follow-up action/advice required? Y/N:*

   Please specify what is required or why it is not required:

6. *Are there any issues to be addressed with any placement setting/organisation following this referral? Y/N – please specify.*

   If yes, please state what actions have been taken to pass the matter on to practice learning/other colleagues internally/externally:

7. *Are there any PSRB/CQC issues emanating from this referral? Y/N:*

   If yes, please specify and note to whom these issues have been passed internally:

8. *Are there any training/institutional issues emanating from this referral? Y/N:*

   If yes, please specify and note to whom these are to be referred:

Name of person completing this form:

Signature:

Date:

Edge Hill University: Faculty of Health, Social Care & Medicine

Raising a Concern Form

[In Confidence]

Your name………

Your role/organisation (Student/Staff/External staff/Public)……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Your details (phone/mob/email)………………………………………………………………………………………

………..

Who does your concern relate to? (Please provide the name of the student/staff/service/other person)

………

Where are they based? (EHU/External Agency/Elsewhere?)………………………………………………………………………………………

Please indicate below the issue(s) you are raising and how concerned you are:

What is the broad nature of your concern(s)?	Minor concern?	Moderate concern?	Major concern?
Safety of a patient/service user/carer/other			**This is possibly a safeguarding issue – see separate guidance**
Inappropriate behaviour, conduct or a perceived lack of professionalism			
Wellbeing/health of staff/student/other			
Confidentiality/data breach			
A service is not compliant with regulatory/other requirements			
Bullying/harassment or other form(s) of discriminatory behaviour			
Other (specify)			

Please provide details of your concern, giving as much information as possible

Thank you. Once completed, please send/pass this form to the programme leader/member of staff/Head of Department.