

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Safe- Guarding POLICY



KNUST SAFEGUARDING POLICY



**KWAME NKUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI-GHANA
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
PLANNING UNIT**

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FOREWORD

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi exists to advance knowledge in science and technology through creating an environment for undertaking relevant research, quality teaching, entrepreneurship training and community engagement to improve the quality of life. In order to achieve this mission, there is the need to have a **Safe Guarding Policy**.

This policy is intended to ensure a safe environment for children and adults who may be at risk. The policy also applies to all University staff, applicants, students, volunteers, anyone representing the University, and visitors to the University.

The University is grateful to all those who ensured the initiation, development and approval of this Policy.

PROFESSOR (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson

VICE-CHANCELLOR

KNUST

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As part of the strategic planning mandate of the Quality Assurance and Planning Unit (QAPU), University policies are initiated and proposed for approval by the Academic Board. The Unit in collaboration with the Office of Grants and Research (OGR) therefore initiated the preparation of the **Safe Guarding Policy** and submitted for approval by the Academic Board.

The QAPU is grateful to Prof. R. C. Abaidoo (Director), Mrs. Amanda Owusu-Asare (Assistant Registrar), Mrs. Abigail Anderson (Assistant Registrar), Mrs. Hannah Adom Eyison and the entire staff of OGR for their invaluable contributions to this policy. A special thanks go to the Building Stronger Universities Project (BSU1111) for providing financial and technical support for developing grants related policies in the University including the **Safe Guarding Policy**.

Lastly, we wish to appreciate the work of the Review Committee and all staff of the University who contributed in several ways to the development and approval of this Policy

PROFESSOR JERRY JOHN KPONYO

HEAD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the policy and procedures of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology to ensure a safe environment for children and adults who may be at risk.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all University staff, applicants, students, volunteers, anyone representing the University, and visitors to the University. It applies to all activities involving contact with children or vulnerable adults, who may be at risk. The policy includes face to face activities and activities delivered virtually.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 STUDENT

Student is anybody who is enrolled on a Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology programme of study, as defined in the **KNUST Student Guide and Code of Conduct**.

3.2 CHILDREN

Children are people under the age of 18 years.

3.3 VULNERABLE ADULTS

Vulnerable Adults are people by law, known to be over the age of 18 years who receive assistance or support in the form of a Regulated Activity.

3.4 REGULATED ACTIVITY

Regulated Activity includes health care; personal care; social work; daily assistance; teaching, training or instructing and advice or guidance provided mainly for children.

3.5 SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Safeguarding in the context of the University also refers more broadly to concerns about the well-being of students, staff and visitors.

3.6 SAFEGUARDING IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Each year, the university admits students who are under the age of 18 at entry and engages some children in its outreach programmes. Staff and students over the age of 18 may be vulnerable because of mental ill-health concerns, disability, a medical condition or illness. Many of our students work with children or vulnerable adults as part of their studies or career development goals. Researches also take place which may involve vulnerable groups.

4.0 POLICY MEASURES

The University believes all individuals have a right to learn and develop within a safe environment, and is committed to protecting children and adults who may be at risk from harm. The University is not however 'in loco parentis' (having the legal status of a parent) and cannot accept the responsibilities of guardian to any member of its community.

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology:

4.1

Believes it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all by a commitment to practices which protect them.

4.2

Recognises that all people, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race and religious belief have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

4.3

Recognises its responsibilities to protect staff, students and volunteers against all forms of abuse.

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology will seek to protect children and vulnerable adults:

4.4

By giving staff information, training and guidance about how to recognise potential abuse, how to respond appropriately and how to report it, and by making staff aware that they have a responsibility to report any concerns they are aware of regarding a safeguarding matter to the appropriate person (see sections 11 and 12).

4.5

By adopting a broad approach to its safeguarding responsibilities which encompasses well recognised forms of abuse including Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Sexual Abuse etc. It also considers issues such as self-harm and the causes and risk of radicalisation amongst students.

4.6

By ensuring that all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously, investigated and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

4.7

By sharing information about concerns within the university and with external agencies where appropriate.

4.8

By working in partnership with relevant agencies, ensuring that all parties recognise their responsibilities to each other, act upon them and accept collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

5.0 DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

5.1

Everyone who works at KNUST shares responsibility for making the University a safe and secure environment for all its members.

5.2

Child protection over-rides confidentiality and internal hierarchies. Staff should not collude with parents, children or other staff member to keep concerns secret in the name of child protection.

5.3

Members of staff and students should not normally make referral to external authorities themselves other than in consultation with a Safeguarding Officer. This does not override any responsibilities to report concerns to the relevant professional bodies, but this should normally be done in consultation with the Lead Safeguarding Officer who will normally consult the appropriate external body where necessary.

5.4

Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and students under the age of 18 or who are vulnerable adults are an abuse of trust and may constitute a criminal offence.

5.5

Care should be exercised in the use of language. For example, unnecessary comments which could be interpreted as having a sexual connotation should be avoided.

5.6

There will be occasions when children are placed in settings outside of their normal place of study (e.g. a placement, field trip or sports event). Organisers must ensure that risk assessments are conducted and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

5.7

If a member of staff feels that they or other members of the University may be at risk from being the subject of or exposed to unwarranted accusations in connection with children or students who are vulnerable adults, they should alert their Head of Department or line manager.

5.8

This policy will assume that staff members would not raise a concern unless they have genuine reason to do so. Where concerns are raised in good faith, there will not be any retribution even if they turn out to be mistaken. However, where it is eventually proven that allegations made against a staff or student is malicious and unfounded, the person raising the concern will be investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action which could ultimately result in dismissal.

6.0 DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

In response to this duty of care, the University has appointed a team of Designated Officers responsible for receiving and acting upon reports of safeguarding concerns. These officers are trained to respond appropriately to reports and to support anyone who makes a report.

6.1 LEAD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The University Registrar, who shall be the Lead Safeguarding Officer;

- i. Has overall responsibility for the University's Safeguarding Policy, its implementation and promotion; and
- ii. Ensures that the Safeguarding Policy guidance is updated regularly to reflect legislative changes and good practice.

6.2 SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

The other safeguarding officers include the Deputy Registrar, Academic and the Deputy Registrar, Human Resources. They shall:

- i. Investigate allegations of abuse or non-compliance occurring on University premises or involving University staff or students.
- ii. Make adult and child protection referrals to the relevant agencies as appropriate.

6.3 HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The Human Resources Department shall

- i. Determine which staff roles require Criminal Records Checks, undertake all checks for relevant staff and maintain appropriate records.

- ii. Keep up to date legal requirements and make recommendations for good practice and other relevant aspects of recruitment and selection of staff.
- iii. Ensure that safeguarding information is disseminated to HR staff.
- iv. Provide training in safeguarding as part of the staff development programme

6.4 HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS/DIRECTORS OF UNITS

- i. Ensure that all activities and contacts in their area involving children or vulnerable people are in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- ii. Investigate and remedy any apparent non-compliance.
- iii. Where relevant, arrange appropriate training for their staff.

6.5 SUPERVISORS

- i. Ensure that all staff in their area are made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- ii. Where relevant, arrange appropriate training for their staff.
- iii. Where relevant, monitor and evaluate staff compliance with Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as part of ongoing work review processes.

7.0 SAFEGUARDING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE VULNERABLE ADULTS OR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

7.1 GENERAL

The University does not discriminate on the basis of age or disability and admits suitably qualified applicants who are under 18 years old or who are vulnerable adults. The University and all its services and facilities constitute an open access and predominantly adult environment. As such the University treats all students as independent, mature individuals. The University therefore, does not accept the rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and will not act in loco parentis in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years.

The standard personal and academic support arrangements apply equally for students who are under and over 18 years of age. However, the University acknowledges that students under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults may have additional needs in relation to their support and welfare and the University encourages self-disclosure of information by students to support this.

7.2 UNDER 18 YEAR OLDS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- 7.2.1** Under 18 year olds and vulnerable adults who are admitted as students to the University are subject to the standard admissions procedures.
- 7.2.2** The University identifies students who are under 18 on entry and provides this information to staff who may come

into contact with them in order to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place. These staff may include Heads of Academic Departments and relevant Programme Tutors and College Registrars.

- 7.2.3** The University will seek to work with applicants who will be under the age of 17 on entry and their parent or guardian to carry out an individual 'risk and readiness' assessment to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place and to ensure that the parent or guardian has a full understanding of the nature of the University environment and the support that is (or is not) available.

7.3 CONTRACTS

People who are 16 or 17 years old are able to enter into necessary contracts for such matters as education and accommodation, even though they are not considered legally competent under the laws of the Republic of Ghana to enter into all legal contracts. Students of 16 years and above will therefore be expected to sign their own University registration, and accommodation contracts where appropriate.

Vulnerable adults are similarly able to enter into contracts unless they lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. It is assumed by the University that students who are classified as vulnerable adults have the capacity to sign contracts for themselves unless the University is presented with evidence to the contrary.

7.4 ALCOHOL

It is illegal for alcohol to be sold to or bought by or for people who are under the age of 18 years. The University takes reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the University's control but cannot undertake to supervise individual students.

7.5 PARENTAL AND THIRD-PARTY INVOLVEMENT

In normal circumstances the University deals directly with students (with whom it has a contractual relationship) and not with parents or other third parties and this approach applies to students who are either vulnerable adults or under 18 years.

The University has duties under data protection legislation to preserve the right to privacy and confidentiality of students. The University only discloses information regarding students (including vulnerable adults or under 18 year olds) to third parties (including parents, guardians and next of kin) in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

7.6 SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Under Ghana's Age of consent and Sex Laws, it is a criminal offence for a person to engage in a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 16 when they are in a position of trust in relation to that person. At KNUST, all staff, volunteers and anyone formally representing the University are considered to be in a position of trust for this purpose.

7.7 FIELD TRIPS

Courses may involve compulsory or optional field trips or periods of study away from the University. The University includes the safeguarding of under 18 year olds and vulnerable adults in the pre-departure risk assessment procedure. Beyond this and the general requirements of this policy and procedure, no additional arrangements are made.

7.8 USE OF IT FACILITIES

The University's Conditions of Use of Communications and IT Facilities prohibit their use to access, store or distribute material which is offensive, obscene, indecent, discriminatory or harassing. The IT facilities are however an open access environment and use of IT facilities by members of staff and students is not routinely monitored. Appropriate supervision should be given if children are allowed to make use of the

University's IT facilities advice on data and computer security, and keeping safe online is provided for staff and students.

8.0 SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS WHO ARE NOT STUDENTS

8.1 ORGANISED ACTIVITIES

The safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults visiting the University is the responsibility of the organiser of the activities in which the children or vulnerable adults are participating. This includes sporting activities and organised visits. Where the University is not formally the organiser of the activities, it accepts no liability.

It is the responsibility of the organiser of activities to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken in relation to the health, safety and wellbeing of children participating in activities on the University campus. Advice on safeguarding for University staff organising activities for children or vulnerable adults should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Officers.

8.2 AD HOC VISITORS

Children of visitors, staff or students on campus remain the responsibility of their parent/guardian at all times.

8.3 CHILDREN AS PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Procedures to be followed if children are to participate in research projects are outlined in the Ethics Board's Guidelines for Research.

9.0 SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENT PLACEMENTS

9.1

Whilst engaged in University activities, students may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, for example whilst they are on placement or visiting a setting as part of their programme of studies.

9.2

Programme Tutors will ensure that:

- 9.2.1** the students are informed about the requirements of this Safeguarding Policy and of the Safeguarding Policy of the setting in which their placement will be undertaken, including who they should contact should any issues arise;
- 9.2.2** the students have undertaken appropriate Safeguarding Awareness Training.

9.3

If a student has safeguarding concerns while on placement, they should immediately report these to the Safeguarding Officer of the setting.

9.4

Children may visit campus with their teachers to access facilities here and safeguarding issues remain the responsibility of the placement setting, as they would with any other field trip.

10.0 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF

10.1

The University takes all appropriate steps to safeguard children or vulnerable adults with whom its work brings in contact.

10.2

The University submits to its duty to notify the relevant law enforcement agencies regarding the conduct of any individual which the University considers to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups.

10.3

Decisions regarding which staff roles require Criminal Records checks are made by the Human Resources Department.

10.4 STAFF DUTY TO NOTIFY

All staff engaged in Regulated Activity are contractually obliged to notify the University of any post-employment criminal convictions that may impact upon their future employment with the University. If staff members are found to be in breach of this obligation, disciplinary action may be taken with potential sanctions including dismissal.

10.5 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- The University will provide a copy of this policy and procedure in induction packs for all new staff.

- The University provides training, including child and vulnerable adult protection and health & safety guidance, to all relevant staff and students upon appointment.
- Update safeguarding training is also offered when required, to all staff who work with students whose programme of study requires involvement in Regulated Activity.
- Designated Safeguarding Officers offer advice on request.

11.0 RECOGNISING POTENTIAL ABUSE

There are a number of ways in which abuse of a child or vulnerable adult can become apparent:

- A child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse.
- A third party discloses that a child or vulnerable adult has told him or her that abuse is taking place.
- A child or vulnerable adult shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child or vulnerable adult's behaviour leads to suspicion that he or she is being or has been abused.
- A member of staff behaves in the way in which his or her dealings with a child or vulnerable adult causes concern.

12. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

12.1

The University will respond in an appropriate, proportionate and timely way to suspicions or allegations of abuse.

12.2

All members of the University have a duty to raise concerns, without prejudice to their own position, about behaviour by staff, managers, volunteers, students or others. Staff should recognise that it is their duty to inform but not to investigate.

12.3

Staff are required to report any incident of abuse or cause for concern which arises in the course of their work with children and vulnerable adults. This must be reported immediately to any of the Designated Safeguarding Officers. The following list gives examples of incidents which are required to be reported. It is not exhaustive:

12.3.1 A child or vulnerable adult is accidentally hurt

12.3.2 There is concern that relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust

12.3.3 A member of staff is worried that a child or vulnerable adult is becoming attracted to them or a colleague; or a member of staff is becoming attracted to someone in his/her care

- 12.3.4** A child or vulnerable adult displays inappropriate sexually explicit behaviour or sexual awareness
- 12.3.5** A member of staff believes a child or vulnerable adult has misinterpreted or misunderstood something that has happened or something that a colleague has done
- 12.3.6** A member of staff notices any suspicious marks on a child or vulnerable adult or receives a report or hears of an allegation of abuse from a child or vulnerable adult regarding events outside the University
- 12.3.7** A member of staff or a colleague, has had to use reasonable physical restraint to prevent a child or vulnerable adult harming themselves or another, or from causing significant damage to property
- 12.3.8** There is suspicion of or an allegation is made of abuse

12.4

If there is an immediate risk of significant harm and emergency medical treatment is required, this must be arranged following normal health and safety procedures.

12.5

Any suspicions or allegations should be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Officer who will investigate the matter and determine an appropriate course of action, including contacting external authorities where this is indicated.

12.6

Disclosing abuse is difficult for a variety of reasons. Some children and vulnerable adults do not disclose because they feel they will not be believed or be taken seriously. It is very important that staff actively

listen and respond sensitively. Creating a safe space to talk is crucial in breaking down barriers to disclosure.

12.7

Make a detailed written record of the matter and report it without delay to your line manager and/or a Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the allegation concerns someone who is not a student, this should be the Deputy Registrar, Human Resources. If the allegation concerns a student, this should be the Deputy Registrar, Academic.

12.8

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform the Lead Safeguarding Officer and will investigate the matter, consulting with relevant internal departments and external agencies as appropriate.

12.9

If an allegation is raised against a member of staff or student they may be informed of the allegation, on the advice of the Local Authority and/or Police, and may be removed from contact with children and vulnerable adults in line with the appropriate disciplinary process.

12.10

Any internal disciplinary action arising from an investigation will be handled in accordance with the relevant disciplinary process.

12.11

If the matter is the subject of a criminal investigation:

- The University is entitled to pursue its own or complementary confidential enquiries and disciplinary action and the Lead Safeguarding Officer will consult with the relevant agencies in such cases.

- To maintain the integrity of the investigation, individuals who face an allegation may be advised to only discuss the substance of the allegation with his or her union or legal representative, immediate family or as directed by the investigating officer.
- Following an investigation, disciplinary action may be taken as appropriate

12.12

Information is shared and discussed between staff and relevant agencies on a need-to-act basis only.

12.13

The written record of the matter will be retained by the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

13.0 COMPLIANCE WITH THESE PROCEDURES

13.1

The University expects staff and all those contributing to its activities to follow the requirements of this policy and procedure and to promote a safe environment in which the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is protected and promoted.

13.2

Failure to follow this policy and procedures may not constitute abuse, but is nonetheless a matter of concern for the University and may lead to disciplinary action.

13.3

If members of staff, students, or volunteers are concerned that the guidance and procedures are not being followed, they should contact their line manager, Designated Safeguarding Officer or Lead Safeguarding Officer.

14.0 RELATED POLICES AND PROCEDURES

14.1

The University has a number of established policies, procedures and practices which provide guidance to protection of members of staff and students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- The Statutes of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Administrative Manual
- KNUST Staff Recruitment Policy
- KNUST Sexual Harassment Policy
- KNUST Risk Management Policy
- Policies and Procedures on Data Protection (Draft)
- Ethics Policy
- KNUST Students' Guide and Code of Conduct

14.2

The guidance and legislative framework that underpins this document includes:

- Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651)
- Labour Regulations, 2007, (L.I 1833)
- Republic of Ghana, Children's Act, 1998 Act 560
- Republic of Ghana, Persons with Disability Act, 2006 Act 715

15.0 REVIEW

15.1

The Quality Assurance and Planning Unit of the University, will be responsible for reviewing and updating this policy. The policy document will be reviewed every three (3) years or when necessary.

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