

ROBERT COLLEGE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 1.5: August 2024



All Robert College employees are required to adhere to this policy, and to be bound by it.

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Links to other policies:

[Anti-bullying Policy](#)

[Peer on Peer Abuse: Policy Regarding Prevention and Response](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Faculty Recruitment Policy](#)

[Managing allegations relating to infringement of Robert College's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)

[Online Safety Policy](#)

1. INTENDED AUDIENCE

- 1.1. All employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff), trustees, volunteers and interns should familiarize themselves with, and abide by, this policy.
- 1.2. All Robert College parents are expected to be familiar with this policy.
- 1.3. This policy will be posted on the intranet, the parent portal and the student portal.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

- 2.1. This policy is available for all employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff), trustees, volunteers and interns, Robert College parents and Robert College students.
- 2.2. Following review, the new copy should replace the old: on the intranet, the parent portal and the student portal. The following colleagues should then be notified:
 - All employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff), trustees, volunteers and interns.

3. COMPLIANCE

- 3.1. All employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff), trustees, volunteers and interns are expected to comply with this policy.
- 3.2. Any non-compliance should be referred to the Head of School, or in his absence, the Associate Heads of School, for a decision.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1. This policy covers:

- The procedures for identifying and reporting child protection concerns;
- The role of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Deputy CPOs; and the role of all Robert College employees with regard to child protection and safeguarding;
- The procedures to follow related with good practice in safeguarding at Robert College;
- The response to an allegation against any Robert College personnel along with advice for employees to minimize the risks of them being subject to a false allegation;
- The actions that Robert College will take in response to peer-on-peer sexual abuse;
- The support that Robert College will provide to students who are subject to a child protection referral;
- The procedures to be followed in order to inform Robert College students about keeping safe and resisting abuse.

4.2. Key roles and contact details are:

- Child Protection Officer: Dr. Margaret Halıcıoğlu (mhalicioglu@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592270)
- Deputy Child Protection Officers: Nilhan Cetinyamaç (ncetinyamac@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592440), Koray Demirkapı (kdemirkapi@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592498) and Füsun Toparlak (ftoparlak@robccol.k12.tr/ tel. 212-3592259)
- Head of School: Adam Oliver (aoliver@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592212)
- Associate Heads of School: Nilhan Çetinyamaç (ncetinyamac@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592440) and Ümran Üngün (uungun@robcol.k12.tr / tel. 212-3592313)
- Chairman of the Board of Trustees: Erol Hakanoğlu (2023rcbc@gmail.com)

5. INTRODUCTION: POLICY STATEMENT/ AIMS OF THE POLICY

5.1. Policy Statement:

This policy puts the safety and well-being of students at the center of Robert College's work.

It gives clear guidance to its employees, trustees, volunteers and interns about appropriate safeguarding practices and the appropriate response to child protection issues.

Safeguarding students requires a coordinated approach and is everyone's responsibility. No single person can have a full picture of a student's needs and circumstances. In order for students and their families to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

There can be no greater issue of importance to parents, or to schools, than the safety of their children: safeguarding, therefore, remains a priority across all aspects of Robert College's work. The school maintains an attitude of "it could happen here", where safeguarding and child protection are concerned, because this will help all members of the Robert College community to always be vigilant and provide the very best level of care.

Robert College will provide a safe, welcoming, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and psychological development of the individual student, free from discrimination or bullying, where students can learn, develop their skills, explore new avenues, and follow their academic and/or co-curricular passions. We strive for a culture of openness, where both students and adults feel secure, able to talk, and believe that they are being listened to.

5.2. Aims:

The aims of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are to ensure that:

- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are clear, concise and easy to follow;
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are well understood by all employees, trustees, volunteers and interns:
- Child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally, and in ways that support the needs of the student;
- Students identified as "at risk" are monitored and supported;
- Students are aware of when and how to ask for help;

- Parents understand the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all students, and a recognition that this may occasionally require cases to be referred to other agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- Every Robert College employee has the best interests of the student in every decision made, and that this is their primary consideration;
- All Robert College students, regardless of their age, are protected by this policy, as they are all "minors" in the eyes of the MEB;
- All Robert College procedures are reviewed regularly, following best practice in child protection and safeguarding.

6. DEFINITIONS AND KEY TERMS

Abuse: Abuse can mean neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse, or sexual abuse, or any combination of these. Parents and others can harm children either by direct acts and/or failure to provide proper care.

Child Protection: Child protection is focused on how to respond to children who have been significantly harmed, or are at risk of significant harm.

Child Protection Team: At Robert College, the Child Protection Team consists of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and the Deputy CPOs.

CPO: Child Protection Officer, the person in the school responsible for following up on all child protection and safeguarding matters, under the supervision of the Head of School. At Robert College, this is Dr. Margaret Haliciođlu.

Deputy CPOs: The Deputy CPOs fulfill the same duties as the CPO, in the CPO's absence. At Robert College, the Deputy CPOs are Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Füsun Toparlak and Koray Demirkapı. Please always contact the CPO if available, but consult with one or both of the Deputy CPOs if the CPO is absent: never wait for the CPO to return from absence before taking action.

Safeguarding: Safeguarding is the proactive protection of all children from maltreatment of any sort.

7. PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

7.1. Principles

- 7.1.1. All children have a right to feel secure; they cannot learn effectively unless they do so. Therefore, Robert College will maintain a positive school atmosphere, careful and vigilant teaching, strong pastoral care, effective support of students, and provision of good role models. All employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff), trustees, volunteers and interns have a key role in the prevention of harm and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a student is at risk of harm, either on campus or in the community.
- 7.1.2. All employees of Robert College (including outsourced staff) are appropriately recruited (with security checks made), then trained and supported so that they feel equipped to respond sensitively to potential child protection concerns.
- 7.1.3. All Robert College students who report abuse will be supported within the school.

7.2. Roles and Responsibilities

All personnel (teaching or non-teaching, employed by the school or outsourced), trustees, volunteers and interns have responsibilities concerning safeguarding and child protection.

7.2.1. Roles and responsibilities of faculty members

Faculty members have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for their students. They have regular opportunities to observe their students, including changes in behavior: seeing students in context like this is incredibly valuable. Faculty members also have an ongoing relationship with their students, who may confide in them about difficulties they are experiencing. All faculty members must understand the importance of reporting suspicious circumstances to the Child Protection Officer (CPO). Beyond the initial reporting of suspected child abuse, faculty have a restricted role, as further judgements, decisions and actions will be taken by the CPO, not by the faculty member reporting the suspicion. Faculty members should never themselves investigate any suspicion of child abuse.

Faculty members have a professional duty to:

- Establish and maintain an environment where their students feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;

- Ensure students know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns (counselors, level deans, their adviser, the CPO and Deputy CPOs, or any member of the Senior Leadership Team);
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop the skills they need to recognize, assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe;
- Undergo training in order to be aware of and alert to signs of abuse;
- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to child protection;
- Observe and be alert to signs of abuse or changes in behavior;
- Take immediate action, in the student's best interest, by reporting any suspicion, evidence of abuse, or evidence of non-accidental injury to the CPO;
- Follow the allegations procedure (see 7.4.2) if the concern is an allegation against a Robert College employee;
- Treat information gathered from students with confidentiality, but never promise to keep a secret;
- Know who the CPO and the Deputy CPOs are, and details of their roles;
- Enquire about the general progress of individual cases in which they are/have been involved, thereby ensuring that a case they have identified is being followed up on thoroughly;
- Have read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Responsible Use Protocols (RUP) for both students, and RC personnel.

7.2.2. Roles and responsibilities of non-teaching personnel (including outsourced staff), trustees, interns and volunteers

Non-teaching personnel come into contact with students in a range of ways, and in different locations, e.g. on a service bus, in the lunch line, in offices, and on a Community Involvement Program (CIP) project. Students may feel comfortable talking with such adults, sharing their concerns. All non-teaching personnel must therefore understand the importance of reporting suspicious circumstances to the Child Protection Officer (CPO). Beyond the initial reporting of suspected child abuse, non-

teaching personnel have a restricted role, as further judgements, decisions and actions will be taken by the CPO, not by the person reporting the suspicion. Non-teaching personnel should never themselves investigate any suspicion of child abuse.

Non-teaching personnel have a duty to:

- Ensure students know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns (counselors, level deans, their adviser, the CPO and Deputy CPOs, any member of the Senior Leadership Team, or any member of the teaching faculty who they trust);
- Undergo training in order to be aware of and alert to signs of abuse;
- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding;
- Observe and be alert to signs of abuse or changes in behavior;
- Take immediate action, in the student's best interest, by reporting any suspicion, evidence of abuse, or evidence of non-accidental injury to the CPO;
- Follow the allegations procedure (see 7.4.2) if the concern is an allegation against a Robert College employee;
- Treat information gathered from students with confidentiality, but never promise to keep a secret;
- Know who the CPO and the Deputy CPOs are, and details of their roles;
- Enquire about the general progress of individual cases in which they are/have been involved, thereby ensuring that a case they have identified is being followed up on thoroughly;
- Have read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Responsible Use Protocols (RUP) for both students, and RC personnel.

7.2.3. Roles and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer and Deputy Child Protection Officers

At Robert College, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) is Dr. Margaret Halıcioğlu, and the Deputy CPOs are Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Füsün Toparlık and Koray Demirkapı. In addition to the responsibilities of all faculty members (see 7.2.1), the special duties of the CPO and deputies include:

- Dealing with reports of child abuse;
- Reporting any child protection complaints or allegations against any Robert College employee (including outsourced staff), trustee, intern or volunteer immediately to the Head of School;
- Making referrals to outside agencies or organizations (see 7.8 below) when necessary;
- Maintaining and storing securely all records of suspicions and allegations, and archiving as necessary;
- Meeting with the Child Protection Team whenever there is an allegation;
- Keeping the Head of School informed of any child protection issues that arise;
- Supporting any Robert College employee who makes a referral;
- Ensuring that all RC employees receive basic child protection training every year;
- Ensuring that all new staff, volunteers and interns have child protection training and are made aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Ensuring that the Head of School, SLT and residential staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection;
- Ensuring that recruitment procedures take into account best practice in child protection and safeguarding;
- Ensuring that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed within Robert College.

If the CPO is absent for any reason, all Robert College employees should contact one of the Deputy CPOs, or, in their absence, a member of the SLT.

7.2.4. Role and responsibility of the Head of School

The Head of School, Adam Oliver, has overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, ensuring that the CPO fulfils the role. He will report annually to the Board of Trustees on child protection and safeguarding matters.

7.3. Preventative Measures

High self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and clear lines of communication with trained and trusted adults will help to protect our students from potential abuse. For these reasons, we have a strong pastoral care system comprising:

- Counselors, one per level, who meet weekly with each section in the level, and have individual meetings with students, and, when necessary, their parents, focusing on students' psychological health and preventative care;
- Advising: every faculty member has a group of approximately 10 students who they typically follow from Lise Prep until graduation, getting to know each student individually, following their academic and emotional development for 5 years;
- Level deans, one per level, each responsible for promoting the personal development of their students, including behavior, academics and general welfare;
- Assemblies: weekly in Lise Prep, and periodically for all other levels, to provide opportunities for a whole level to build a sense of community and learn about topics which will support their development and growth as individuals;
- Well-being classes in Lise Prep, L9 and L10: a lesson designed to proactively strengthen our students' coping skills, ability to create healthy relationships, resilience, awareness of their own safety, realistic attitudes to their future responsibilities, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Students are aware of who they can approach when they need support, choosing whoever they feel most comfortable with: their counselor, their adviser, their level dean, any member of the SLT, or any of their teachers or staff members in whom they trust. Being in a supportive community, acquiring problem-solving skills, having a supportive family, and being surrounded by compassionate empathetic adults are all significant protective factors from abuse.

7.4. Reporting Procedures

The early sharing of information is essential for effective identification, assessment and allocation of the necessary support. No adult in the Robert College community should assume that a colleague or another member of the community will take action if they do not themselves: everyone has the responsibility to share information, which might be critical to keep students safe. Reporting a suspicion to the CPO allows the matter to be investigated cautiously, sensitively and thoroughly. These points should be remembered:

- Talk immediately to the CPO;

- Do not undertake your own investigation;
- Do not discuss the matter with colleagues, friends or family: rather respect the sensitivity of the matter in hand;
- Complete the Child Protection Report Form and hand the hard copy to the CPO: never email anything of a sensitive nature regarding members of the RC community.

An adult only requires reasonable cause for concern regarding potential child abuse in order to report the concern. Arriving at the point where information and its interpretation give reasonable cause for concern depends upon the source of information. If the information comes from the student, then the adult should act immediately and contact the CPO in person. Even one sentence from a student, either in writing or verbally, is sufficient to warrant contacting the CPO. On investigation, maybe there is no cause for concern. Or maybe the action of a concerned individual prevents harm from occurring: erring on the side of caution and talking to the CPO is always advised.

Any concern should be shared face-to-face with the CPO: leaving a voice message or a text message, or sending an email, is insufficient. If the CPO is not immediately available, contact one of the Deputy CPOs, or, in their absence, any other member of the SLT. RC personnel reporting any suspicion or actual case of abuse do so first face-to-face with the CPO, and then in writing using the Child Protection Concern Form, handed in person to the CPO. If anyone is not sure whether or not a concern needs to be reported in writing, the RC employee can talk first with the CPO. The Child Protection Concern Form is available on the Robert College intranet, and in Appendix I of this policy.

Parents are informed by one of the Child Protection Team when their child is the victim of any child protection matter, unless there is risk to the child's safety as a result of reporting it.

Once the CPO has been informed, the person reporting withdraws from the process, but remains vigilant. If there is any concern that the necessary measures are not being taken, the person reporting should feel free to check with the CPO that action is being taken, whilst being aware that the CPO will not disclose the nature of any steps underway.

If, after investigation, it is found that the student who has reported abuse has fabricated the evidence, and had malicious intent, then the student will face disciplinary consequences.

Reporting Chain	
Concern	Report to
Concern about a student	Child Protection Officer
Concern about a parent	Child Protection Officer
Concern about an RC employee	Head of School, or, in his absence, one of the Associate Heads
Concern about the CPO or Deputy CPOs	Head of School, or, in his absence, one of the Associate Heads
Concern about the Head of School	Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Concern about adult(s) or personnel from another school	Child Protection Officer

7.4.1. If a student makes a disclosure to you

It takes a lot of courage for a student to approach an adult, to disclose abuse. The adult should help the student to understand that in such a situation, the adult cannot keep secrets, and will have to pass on the information to the CPO, who will follow up sensitively with the matter. The point at which this piece of information is shared with the student is a matter of professional judgement: telling the student this too early might close the conversation, and the potential good to come from the student's disclosure could be compromised if the student then stops talking. The priority is always to protect the student.

When a student discloses some form of abuse, please:

- Let the student speak freely;
- Be calm and collected: if the student sees you are upset with what is being shared, the student may stop talking;
- Be reassuring, e.g. by nodding, or offering comfort with comments such as "This is not your fault", "I am sorry this has happened to you";

- Show the student that you believe what is being told;
- Treat the matter seriously – research shows that children are very unlikely to fabricate allegations of sexual abuse;
- Do not be afraid of silences: allow the student the space to formulate their words;
- Never ask investigative or leading questions, such as to the frequency of the abuse, or who else knows about it;
- Be wary of offering physical touch as comfort, as this may be far from comforting to an abused child;
- Inform the student that the CPO must be informed either by the student or by the person hearing the details of the abuse: if the student says they will go and see the CPO, still follow up by informing the CPO this has happened;
- After the disclosure, write down what was said, using the student’s own words as much as possible, and submit the hard copy of the Child Protection Concern Form in person to the CPO: never send sensitive information via email;
- Do not discuss the matter with colleagues, friends or family – to do so would be a breach of trust and professionalism;
- Do not talk to the person against whom the allegation has been made – again, this would be a serious breach of trust.
- Seek support from the CPO or a Robert College counselor if you feel distressed by what you have learnt.

7.4.2. If you suspect a Robert College employee of abusing a student

In the case of a Robert College employee abusing a student, the person reporting this suspicion must go to the Head of School directly. If the Head of School is not available, then one of the Associate Heads of School, Nilhan Çetinyamaç or Ümran Üngün, should be contacted. Please refer to the separate policy “Managing allegations relating to infringement of Robert College’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy”.

Any suspicion should not be ignored. The person reporting the suspicion should not confront the suspected abuser. If the Head of School is the person suspected of abusing a student, then the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Erol Hakanoğlu, should be

contacted directly. Those raising concerns or reporting allegations in good faith will always be supported, and adults in respect of whom concerns or allegations have been raised will not suffer any detriment unless the concern or allegation is found to be substantiated. The safety and well-being of students is dependent on the vigilance of all RC employees and, in such a case, their prompt communication with the Head of School.

7.5. Expectations for Robert College employees regarding their actions related with safeguarding and child protection

Robert College employees must do everything within their power to protect themselves from allegations. Sometimes, innocent comments or actions can be taken out of context and misconstrued. The following shows some of the expectations of a Robert College employee in order to avoid actions which could be misinterpreted:

- Avoid overly private one-to-one situations with a student, including online, e.g. always have the door open, or be in a room with a “windowed door”, or within the hearing of others;
- Only use toilets designated for faculty/staff;
- Faculty and staff members will go into student bathrooms and changing rooms because of a concern they have, especially in an urgent situation regarding student safety;
- Residential staff always knock and wait a few seconds before entering a student’s bedroom;
- Be cautious about giving a lift to a single student in your car, or in a taxi;
- Never make salacious, suggestive or discriminatory comments, either in class, or to an individual student;
- Never allow students to use inappropriate language in your presence;
- Never close the blind on your classroom door, unless for lockdown-related purposes;
- Never befriend or follow a student on social media: this is outlined clearly in the RUP for faculty and staff;

- Never take photos/videos/audio recordings of students on your personal devices unless for a school-related activity: any such photos should be moved to a school-based device within 7 days and deleted from your personal device;
 - Never post photos/videos /audio recordings of students on your personal social media accounts. If posting on your professional social media accounts, students should not be identifiable and names not used.
- Students' photos posted on school social media accounts should not be accompanied by the student's full name. The student's first name may be used, and the graduation year e.g. Deniz RC'27. Advisers and coaches should refer to the Guidelines for RC CTI and CIP Use of Social Media and Webpages, which is posted on the intranet.
- If inviting students to your home, always ensure at least 3 students are in attendance, and that you have informed your department head and the parents in advance;
 - Never meet single students off campus: always ensure at least 3 students are in attendance;
 - Only use school digital platforms, such as the Robert College email, RC Google Classroom and Google Chat, to have individual contact with students.
 - Always engage in a professional manner when interacting with or writing to students.

7.6. Expectations for visitors', volunteer/intern, and alumni interaction with students

We expect all adult interactions with our students to be appropriate, regardless of how the adults are linked with Robert College.

7.6.1. Visiting speakers

- Visiting speakers must be vetted by the faculty or staff member inviting them to speak to students. This could take the form of a letter from the individual's organisation confirming their identity and suitability to speak to students, or a thorough internet search.
- Visiting speakers should be sent ahead of time the Safeguarding Guide for Non-Robert College Personnel Interacting with Robert College Students (Appendix IV), and, if they request it, a copy of this policy.
- Visiting speakers should never be alone with a student.
- Visiting speakers may not take photographs of students.
- Visiting speakers must wear the school's ID badge at all times.

- It is the responsibility of the faculty or staff member who invited the speaker to accompany the visiting speaker while on campus, and to ensure they know our expectations regarding safeguarding and child protection.
- Visiting speakers should not ask for contact details from students, but they may share their professional email address should the students wish to contact them at a later stage.

7.6.2. Volunteers and interns

- Faculty and staff must inform the Child Protection Officer of any volunteers and interns who will interact with our students, so that they can be contacted with details of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which they then accept to follow, in writing.
- Volunteers and interns should never be alone with a student.
- Volunteers and interns may not take photographs of students.
- Volunteers and interns should not ask for students' contact details nor share their own contact details with students.

7.6.3. Alumni

Robert College wants to ensure that any networking between students and alumni is safe, monitored and formal. There is much to be gained from the wealth of knowledge and experience which alumni bring to interactions with students, but it is important to protect both parties in any arrangement. A faculty or staff member will act as a facilitator. Further details can be found in Appendix IV: the Safeguarding Guide for Non-Robert College Personnel Interacting with Robert College Students.

7.6.4. Family members and visitor/guests of faculty and staff

All faculty and staff are expected to share guidance with their family members and visitors/guests who may come into contact with students on campus. The Safeguarding Guide for Robert College Personnel's Family and/or Friends who may Interact with Robert College Students is located in Appendix V.

7.7. Peer on peer abuse

Students can abuse other students; this is often referred to as peer on peer abuse. There is a separate anti-bullying policy which would normally be followed, including for cases of cyberbullying. However, there may be times when bullying requires that the child protection policy is followed, because of the bully's behavior towards the victim, causing significant harm, or the threat of significant harm. There is also a

separate policy, Peer on Peer Abuse: Policy Regarding Prevention and Response. Examples of peer on peer abuse which could constitute a child protection category include:

- Physical abuse such as hitting, shaking, kicking or hair pulling;
- Sexual violence, such as rape or sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment, such as inappropriate language either in a written or oral form, online or face-to-face;
- Sexting, including coercing someone to send sexual images;
- Initiation rituals/hazing, which can be used to allow membership into a group, such as a sports team or residential life, by making the victims undertake humiliating, painful or abusive acts.

All cases of peer on peer abuse must be reported to the CPO. The process for investigating and resolving the case will be as follows:

- The immediate safety of the victim is of paramount importance;
- If necessary, a safe place will be provided;
- An investigation will be carried out, gathering information from those who are aware of or witnessed the incident(s);
- Both sets of parents will be informed, once the CPO is convinced that informing the parent will not exacerbate the situation;
- Support will be offered to all students involved: both the one(s) who suffered abuse, and the one(s) instigating the behavior;
- Consequences for the one(s) who delivered or intended harm will follow.

7.8. Working with other agencies

Schools do not operate in isolation. Robert College will help to protect its students by working consistently and appropriately with agencies/organizations concerned with the welfare of children including, but not limited to:

- MEB's center in the Beşiktaş district *Rehberlik Araştırma Merkezi* (RAM);

- Turkish Social Services and the Child Protection Agency, as referenced in the Child Protection Law No. 5395 (dated 15/7/05);
- The police.

7.9. Listening to the wishes of students

If Robert College becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the student's wishes and feelings will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide, though we will operate with the best interests of the student at heart. If Robert College believes that a child is at risk of harm, a referral to RAM, and/or the Turkish Social Services and the Child Protection Agency, and/or the police will be completed regardless of the student's or parent's wishes.

7.10. Training and awareness of child protection and safeguarding

7.10.1. RC employees

The CPO, the Deputy CPOs and faculty involved in the pastoral care of our students will receive special training, appropriate with their responsibilities, at least once every 2 years. All RC employees receive basic annual child protection training. All new employees, interns and volunteers will have separate training. Outsourced personnel, such as the service bus drivers and catering staff, will have annual training on working in a school, which includes safeguarding and child protection training. In addition, updates will be shared with personnel, as appropriate, during the school year. Those involved in the recruitment of staff will have training in safer recruitment practices every 2 years.

7.10.2. Students

Robert College will foster an environment and ethos in which its students feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk, and they are listened to.

Students are provided with support and guidance with different adults whom they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties: their counsellor, their adviser, their level dean, any of their teachers, an SLT member, or a member of staff with whom they feel close. Training about how to develop healthy relationships and how to take care of themselves is part of the counseling curriculum for all levels, and in the LP and L9 Well-being curriculum. Students are trained to recognize when they are at risk, and how to get help when they need it. This policy is shared on the student portal.

7.10.3. Parents

The Student and Parent Handbook has a section related with child protection and safeguarding. This policy is shared on the parent portal. Parents are encouraged to understand that when a school focuses on child protection and safeguarding, as Robert College does, it is with the purpose of ensuring that everyone in the community is vigilant, and takes the matter seriously, for the benefit of all our students.

7.11. Homestay procedures

In the case of students staying with non-RC families as part of a school activity, there is a detailed procedure (found in Appendix VI), which includes the careful selection and vetting of appropriate families to host our students. Robert College will make every effort to try and ensure the safety of its students in an RC-organised, home stay experience.

7.12. Evidence

If photographic evidence is needed for an investigation, whether related with the MEB or legal institutions, evidence will be stored securely in the Turkish Director's Office for the duration of the case, and destroyed on the conclusion of the case.

7.13. Other precautions

Robert College takes care to ensure to the best of its ability that the physical environment is safe for students.

If a student is in danger to themselves or to others, the security guards may be called to restrain the student and ensure their safety, and the safety of others.

8 APPENDICES

Appendix I: Child Protection Concern Form

Logging a concern about a child's safety and welfare (for use by RC faculty and staff)

Student's Name:	Section:
Date and Time of Incident:	Date and Time (of writing this report):
Your Name:	
Job Title:	Signature
Note the reason(s) for recording the incident.	
Record the following factually: Who? What (if recording a verbal disclosure by a child use their words)? Where? When (date and time of incident)? Any witnesses?	
Professional opinion where relevant (how and why might this have happened)	
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed.	
Any other relevant information (please give facts rather than opinion).	

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else who might read it.

**Please pass this form to the RC Child Protection Officer, Margaret Halıcioğlu
(or in her absence, the Deputy CPOs,
Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Koray Demirkapı and Füsun Toparlak).**

Appendix II: Abuse and neglect

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. All RC employees should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of students who may be in need of help or protection. If employees are unsure, they should **always** speak to the Child Protection Officer.

All Robert College employees should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

i. Indicators of abuse and neglect

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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In the social context of a school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is often light-hearted and minimal. We should be concerned when:

- the explanation does not match the injury;
- the explanation uses words or phrases which sound like adult words, rather than the student's words;
- there is no explanation provided;
- the student is uncomfortable or evasive;
- the student makes an allegation of abuse or assault.

In addition, we should be concerned when the student:

- is reluctant to have parents contacted;
- seems afraid to go home;
- is aggressive towards themselves or others;
- flinches when approached;
- is reluctant to change for P.E.;
- wears long sleeves during hot weather;
- is reluctant to see the school doctor;
- is exceptionally compliant in the presence of their parent(s).

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or

'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Most emotional abuse occurs in low warmth/high criticism homes. It can be very difficult to pinpoint, but can be chronic, cumulative and having a long-term impact. Any inappropriate behavior or spoken word by a parent to a child requires an intervention, the matter being shared with the CPO. We should be concerned when, among other things, a student:

- has continual self-deprecation;
- has neurotic behavior (such as rocking, hair-twisting);
- self-mutilates;
- has clinging behavior;
- fears parents being contacted.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Child sexual abuse is often planned and systematic: people do not sexually abuse children by accident, although sexual abuse can be opportunistic. Typically, an abuser grooms the child, often choosing a vulnerable child and spending time making the child dependent. An abuser frequently grooms the child's environment, trying to ensure that the child's adult protectors (especially parents) are not suspicious of their motives. An abuser is often very popular in his/her environment because of this environmental grooming.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect for Robert College students could take the form of:

- students regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away;
- students being thrown out of the family home;
- living at home in dangerous conditions.

Adapted from: Department of Education. *Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges Part one: Information for all school and college staff*. Crown, Sept. 2019. Department of Education, www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

ii. "Honor Killings"

One type of violence that happens more often in very conservative and patriarchal societies is *Töre ve namus suçları*: "Honor Killings". The term is a misnomer since there is no honor involved in such a murder. This usually targets women and/or gay men. Those individuals who have been victims of sexual violence, those who are perceived to be sexually active, those who refuse arranged marriages and those individuals with non-binary sexual identities can be targeted by their immediate or larger family circle. The assault can take the form of physical or psychological violence; and it is common for individuals to be pressured into committing suicide. This is one of the specific types of violence RC is sensitive to while evaluating potential safeguarding cases. Further details can be found here: <https://www.unfpa.org/news/turkey-confronts-murder-name-honour>.

APPENDIX III: Public Statements regarding Robert College's commitment to child protection and safeguarding of its students

Robert College website: Employment page

Commitment to international child protection standards

Aligned with international child protection standards, Robert College is committed to the safeguarding of children: its recruitment process includes a rigorous child protection element and detailed background checks.

Student and Parent Handbook 2024-25

Robert College is committed to the welfare and protection of its students. Child protection is focused on how to respond to children who have been significantly harmed, or are at risk of significant harm; safeguarding is the proactive protection of all children from maltreatment of any sort. We believe everyone here has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to behave in a way that protects them. We will make sure that all our students have the same protection regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Students with special needs require our extra support.

All adults in the RC community are expected to listen to and respect our students. Each student will have a number of adults in the RC community to turn to regarding their own feelings of safety, or their concern for the safety of others: their counselor, level dean, adviser, trusted teachers, club advisers, SLT members, or staff members. All faculty and staff are trained annually in child protection and safeguarding matters. Any breach of our expectations regarding child protection and safeguarding should be reported to the Child Protection Officer (Margaret Halicioğlu) or, in her absence, one of the Deputy Child Protection Officers (Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Füsun Toparlak and Koray Demirkapı). The Turkish Child Protection Law is followed in all respects. When necessary, the Turkish authorities will be informed of any serious cases. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on the Parent Portal and the Student Portal.

Anyone making an allegation against a Robert College employee should report directly to the Head of School, or in his absence, to one of the Associate Heads of School (Nilhan Çetinyamaç and Ümran Üngün), for the matter to be investigated immediately. If, after investigation, it is revealed that a student falsely or maliciously accused an RC employee, the student will face disciplinary consequences.

Appendix IV: Safeguarding Guide for Non-Robert College Personnel Interacting with Robert College Students

Thank you for agreeing to interact with our students, to enrich their lives, broaden their horizons, inspire, and provide guidance.

At Robert College, we take safeguarding our community very seriously, and we follow up on child protection matters, whether they are on campus, off campus, during school hours or outside school hours. Safeguarding is the proactive protection of all children from maltreatment of any sort.

This is a short guide on how best to conduct interactions with our students, all of whom are minors in the eyes of the Ministry of Education. We want all parties, including you, to feel comfortable with and be protected within this working relationship. In all cases, there will be a designated Robert College faculty or staff member who acts as facilitator between you and students, who should be kept informed of your interactions. This is to protect you, as much as it is to protect our students.

- Please inform the RC facilitator in writing that you are agreeable for your business email address to be shared with students.
- Always use your professional email account for interactions with students.
- Always require students to use their robcol email account in communication with you.
- Do not share your mobile telephone number with the students, and do not ask students for their telephone numbers. Communication should be through official channels, such as institutional email.
- Never be alone with a student, unless the RC facilitator knows in advance the details of the planned meeting: location, date, time and purpose.
- Always remember that RC students are considered as minors, and you are the adult in the relationship.
- Never take photographs or videos of RC students.
- Always stick to the topic stated for the connection to be made, and do not allow the connection to become informal in any way. Should the student want to talk about other matters, direct them to the experienced and professional help available in school, such as our counsellors and level deans.

If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable with a situation, if you feel a student is at risk, or if you have any questions related with safeguarding and child protection, please contact:

Dr. Margaret Halıcıoğlu, the Child Protection Officer:
mhalicioglu@robcol.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592270

If she is unavailable, please contact one of the following:
Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Turkish Director and Deputy Child Protection Officer
ncetinyamac@robcol.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592440

Koray Demirkapı, Head Level Dean and Deputy Child Protection Officer
kdemirkapi@robcol.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592498

Füsun Toparlak, Head of Psychological Counseling and Deputy Child Protection Officer
ftoparlak@robcol.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592259

Appendix V: Safeguarding Guide for Robert College Personnel's Family and/or Friends who may Interact with Robert College Students

At Robert College, we take safeguarding our community very seriously, and we follow up on all child protection matters, whether they are on campus, off campus, during school hours or outside school hours. All of our students are minors in the eyes of the Ministry of Education, even if aged 19. Safeguarding is the proactive protection of all children from maltreatment of any sort, whereas child protection is focused on how to respond to children who have been significantly harmed, or are at risk of significant harm.

We want all parties, including you, to feel comfortable with, and be protected during, any interaction with students, however brief, and this short guide is designed to help you safely conduct interactions with our students, who you may come across on or off campus.

- Do not share your mobile telephone number with students, and do not ask students for their telephone numbers.
- Never be alone with a student.
- Do not offer a ride to a student in your car or in a taxi.
- Never take photographs or videos of RC students.
- Do not befriend nor follow an RC student on social media.
- Never use toilets designated for students.
- Always remember that RC students are considered as minors, and you are the adult in the relationship.

You may come into contact with students in a range of ways, and in different locations, e.g. in the Weights Room while you are working out, on the Plateau, waiting at the gate, or in the corridors. Students may feel comfortable talking with you, sharing their concerns: sometimes it is easier to talk with a stranger, than with someone you know. If this happens, please understand the importance of reporting suspicious circumstances or anything you hear that seems odd to the Child Protection Officer (CPO). They will look into the matter - we take all reported cases seriously. You should never investigate any suspicion of child abuse.

If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable with a situation, if you feel a student is at risk, or if you have any questions related with safeguarding and child protection, please contact a member of the Child Protection Team. If you cannot reach one of them, please contact a member of security, who will contact someone to help. Please do not rely on email when a child is in danger; always speak directly with someone who can help.

Child Protection Team members

Dr. Margaret Haliciođlu, the Child Protection Officer:
mhalicioglu@robcoll.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592270/3592277

Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Turkish Director and Deputy Child Protection Officer
ncetinyamac@robcoll.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592440/3592360

Koray Demirkapı, Head Level Dean and Deputy Child Protection Officer
kdemirkapi@robcoll.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592498

Füsün Toparlak, Head of Psychological Counseling and Deputy Child Protection Officer
ftoparlak@robcoll.k12.tr Telephone: 0-212-3592259

APPENDIX VI:

Homestay Procedures

Welcoming students into a home can be a wonderful and rewarding experience, both for the host family and for the student guests. It is important to understand, however, that it is also a big commitment, both physically and emotionally, and a huge responsibility, regardless of the length of the stay. All members of the host family must understand their role in keeping their guests safe, and creating a calm, welcoming environment for them. The parent whose home will be visited must complete the application form, as least four weeks in advance of the visit.

In order to be considered as a host family, all permanent household members over the age of 18 must have a criminal record check and the document be submitted to the organising teacher at least two weeks before the homestay begins. E-devlet in Turkey supplies this record.

The host family will be contacted ahead of the visit to verify arrangements for the stay, offering the host family the opportunity to ask questions. During the visit, the host family may be contacted by the organising teacher to ensure that the guest student is under their care, and there are no concerns. The host family will have the contact details of the teacher organising the activity, to be contacted whenever there is a concern about the student. It is the host family's responsibility to ensure the safety of the guest student at all times while they are staying with them.

The organiser of the homestay program should establish a close line of communication with partner schools, inform hosting families in writing of any special dietary requirements, and that students should not be taken on potentially hazardous activities (e.g. skiing, swimming) without prior consent. They should ensure that emergency procedures are in place. Contact with host colleagues in the link school should be maintained throughout the exchange. After the exchange has taken place, it should be evaluated, with input from students, staff and host families, with feedback given to the partner school to assist in the planning of future visits.

Any photos taken of the student, with their permission, should not be shared with others, nor posted on social media. Students are allowed to travel in the host family car as long as all safety provisions (such as seat belts) are adhered to.

Student Medication: any medication that the student needs, either over the counter or prescribed medicine, requires parental consent to be given. The student must give in the medication, in a properly labeled container, to the head of the host family, who will ensure the student takes it, as need or prescribed.

Guidelines for host families:

- Provide a single bed, or single occupancy double bed, for the student, ideally in their own room.
- Provide a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner, unless other arrangements have been made for the day.
- Provide 2 contact telephone numbers so that you can be reached in an emergency.
- Provide internet access for the guest student so that they can reach family and the teacher in charge of the visit, as needed.
- Ensure that the spare room or accommodation where the student will be staying is clean and tidy.
- Ensure that all members of the host family understand the space allocated for the guest will be private.

- Ensure that the student gets any medical attention which is needed.
- Ensure that the house has smoke alarms fitted.
- There should be a lock on the bathroom door for privacy boundaries.
- Explain any "house rules" to the student.
- Ensure the student stays with you for all of the time, as originally planned, and does not stay elsewhere.
- Discourage the student from any activity which would be risky, such as cycling without a helmet, water sports, swimming (without a life guard being present), skiing, and extreme sports, such as bungee jumping.
- Ensure that prescription drugs and alcohol are not readily accessible to the student
- If needed, provide laundry facilities.
- Avoid physical contact with the student beyond greetings.
- Respect the rights, privacy and culture of the student.

APPENDIX VII: Works Consulted In Preparation Of This Policy And Further Resources

Works consulted

2019/20 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for Educational Establishments. Oxfordshire County Council, 2019.

Basic Child Protection Information Booklet. Cambridgeshire County Council, 2017.

Child Safeguarding Handbook. UNIS Hanoi, 2019. *UNIS Hanoi*, www.unishanoi.org/page.cfm?p=1517. Accessed 10 Feb. 2020.

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Department of Education. *Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges Part one: Information for all school and college staff.* Crown, Sept. 2019. *Department of Education*, www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

Hall, Andrew. *Safeguarding Handbook for Schools.* England, Success in Schools, 2018.

Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct and Abuse. NYSAIS, 2019. *New York State Association of Independent Schools*, [www.nysais.org/uploaded/Principles_of_Best_Practice/Principles_of_Best_Practice_for_Preventing_and_Responding_to_Sexual_Misconduct_\(administrative_update_July_2019\).pdf?1564431408653](http://www.nysais.org/uploaded/Principles_of_Best_Practice/Principles_of_Best_Practice_for_Preventing_and_Responding_to_Sexual_Misconduct_(administrative_update_July_2019).pdf?1564431408653). Accessed 10 Feb. 2020.

Further resources

Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s." *National Institute for Health and Care Excellence*, www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG89/. Accessed 30 Apr. 2020.

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF, 1990. *UNICEF*, downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf?_ga=2.60317609.507240362.1588504980-302131556.1588504980. Accessed 10 Feb. 2020.

<https://unicef.org/turkiye/en/child-protection-0> [Get proper citation]

APPENDIX VIII: POLICY DISTRIBUTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please fill out the following form to indicate you have read and fully understand the content and implications of this policy.

Policy Document Acknowledgement Form	
Policy name	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Policy number	01
Policy Revision No.	Version 1.5
Name of the Document Author	Dr. Margaret Halicioğlu
Date of Acknowledgement	August 2024
Signature	

Policy details

Policy name	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Policy number	01
Original author	Dr. Margaret Halicioğlu
Person responsible for maintaining, reviewing and updating this policy	Child Protection Officer
Review details	
Review period	annual
The next review time is	August 2025
Required signatories on all changes	1 Adam Oliver 2 Dr. Margaret Halicioğlu

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