



# Under 18s Safeguarding Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

A small number of Students may start their journey at SOAS under the age of 18. SOAS is an adult environment and treats all its students as independent, mature individuals and students who are under the age of 18 years will be treated in the same way. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study and live independently alongside people from a wide variety of backgrounds. This can be particularly challenging for younger students. The usual personal and academic support arrangements will apply to students who are under 18 years.

The School will not take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and it will not act in loco parentis in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years. For this reason, if a student's parents are not resident in the UK, it will be necessary for them to appoint a guardian in the UK and provide contact details for this person and their informed consent to acting in this capacity.

## **2. Contracts**

A person under the age of 18 has the legal right to enter into the necessary contracts for education and accommodation and will be liable for fees and charges payable under those contracts. However until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday will not be legally competent to enter into all legal contracts. In circumstances where a person has to be aged 18 or over to be legally competent to enter into a contract the School requires a student's parent, guardian or UK based nominated guardian to honour all obligations that the student enters into prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **3. Student accommodation**

SOAS does not own its own students' accommodation. Special arrangements cannot be made for students who are under the age of 18 years old. The accommodation priority policies will be applied to them.

## **4. Alcohol**

It is illegal for alcohol to be sold to or bought by students who are under the age of 18 years. The School will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the School's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. The Students' Union is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its own licensed premises.

## **5. Relationships with staff**

Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which may include members of University staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years.

## **6. Field Trips**

Courses may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the School. The School is not able to take any additional responsibility for a student who is under the age of 18 years in relation to such activities. Unless indicated otherwise, by signing the enclosed pro-forma, parents give consent for the student to take part in these activities on that basis.

## **7. Emergency contact**

Appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment is available to students at the School however all students are encouraged to register with local health services. Students who are 16 or over have the legal capacity to consent to medical treatment. Parents/guardians must be aware that the School cannot provide any consent for emergency medical treatment for a student.

Students who under the age of 18 can have their refusal of medical treatment overridden by parents.

## **8. Child Protection**

As a matter of law, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. The School has a responsibility to protect those under the age of 18 years from abuse and will report any suspicions or allegations of abuse of children to the appropriate Social Services officer. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to the Deputy COO (Student Advice and Welfare) who will contact the appropriate authorities.

Relevant student facing support staff will be DBS checked. A network of staff from across the School will undertake Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training to ensure there is a robust network of support for students.

Minimum expectations:

- There will be 1 DSL in IFCELS
- There will be 1 DSL in Student Advice and Wellbeing
- There will be 1 DSL in academic support services
- There will be 1 DSL representing the Foundation Year provision

## **9. Parental involvement**

The School's usual policy is to deal directly with the students (with whom it has a contractual relationship) and not with parents. This approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. The School will therefore correspond with students, not parents.

## **10. Notification**

All department managers will be notified when students under the age of 18 will be registering with their department. The department manager will ensure that the personal tutors and heads of department are aware.

## **11. Communication with staff**

All staff will be made aware of the policy via school wide circulation. All staff will also be made aware of the School's safeguarding policy. Whole school training will be held annually.

## **12. Students Union**

Registry will share a list of students under the age of 18 with the Students' Union before the beginning of each academic session. The Students Union will contact all under 18s to outline the activities they are unable to participate in due to age restrictions.

## **13. What the School will do:**

- Registry will inform the department manager of the names and number of students under 18.
- The department manager will arrange a meeting with the student to discuss support and services available.
- The department manager will confirm with programme and module conveners if there are under 18s on their programmes.
- Registry will inform student advice and wellbeing of the number of Under 18 students.
- Academic Advisors will be asked to meet with the student at least twice a term to provide additional support.
- No staff members will enter a relationship with any students Under 18.

## **14. What the Student will do:**

- The student will be responsible for disclosing their age to fellow students and staff members. Especially prior to any relationships.
- It is the student's responsibility to abide by the law whilst attending SOAS, for example not drinking alcohol at School or department events.
- The student will be expected to attend all lectures, seminars and academic advisor meetings .

**Document Version**

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