How to…

...safeguard

What to consider around safeguarding

The OU Students Association along with the OU recognises that it has a duty of care to children and young people under the age of 18, vulnerable and protected adults, and adults at risk.

This is in line with the OU’s Safeguarding Policy Protecting children and vulnerable adults and in accordance with current legislation and guidance in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding refers to the action that is taken to protect from harm and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

For information, there’s a useful glossary of terms and definitions of vulnerable and protected adults and adults at risk in the OU’s Policy.

You must receive safeguarding training online or face-to-face if your volunteering role regularly involves any members of a protected group and this training should take place before you take up your volunteering role.

Behaviour

You may be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if your volunteering role involves working with any of the protected groups as defined by the OU’s Policy.

You may be in a position of trust and therefore need to exhibit exemplary behaviour and ensure the behaviour of any volunteers you are coordinating.

Although you or a member of your team may act in a well-intentioned way, it could be misinterpreted so be aware:

- that all people including fellow students, staff, team members, those impacted by your volunteering role and other members of the public should be treated with respect and with due regard to cultural differences.
- that you act as an appropriate role model and provide an example you wish others to follow.
- that you must challenge unacceptable behaviour by others. This includes not permitting abusive behaviours such as bullying and ridiculing others. This includes cyber bullying.
that you are careful in your use of language/terminology/behaviour and do not make unnecessary comments or actions which could be interpreted as having a sexual connotation.

that you take special care when discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

that you report any concerns, suspicions or allegations regarding the welfare of a young person immediately to the appropriate person and to Beth Metcalf, Head of Volunteering.

that you ask the consent of anyone appearing in any photographs taken whilst volunteering.

that you or anyone else may not take any images in any format that will be circulated or stored involving anyone under 18 or with protected status without first gaining explicit written informed consent of those involved and their parents, guardian or carer.

**Never:**

- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- allow the use of inappropriate language without challenging it.
- enter into a physical 'adult' relationship with a vulnerable person to whom you are in a position of trust as a volunteer, even if they give their consent. This would be a criminal offence if the relationship was with a child.
- give a vulnerable person or child your personal phone number, email or home address.
- do personal things for a child which they can do for themselves. If a child has a disability any tasks should only be performed with the full understanding and consent of the parents, guardian or carer and then only if the responsible person is unavailable.
- allow allegations by or about a vulnerable person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Please contact the Volunteer team if you have any concerns around safeguarding and if you have any further questions and please ask for further safeguarding training if you feel it necessary.