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Mr Peter McGhee
Principal
St John Rigby College
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Dear Mr McGhee

Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: safeguarding in colleges

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 2 November 2010 to look at your provision for safeguarding students.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in safeguarding in colleges. The publication will include case studies about individual providers. If St John Rigby RC Sixth Form College is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment prior to publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

Features of best practice

- The college provides a welcoming and supportive safe environment, which ensures that students have a strong feeling of safety within a close college community. They are clear that safety is a high priority of the college. Students understand that inappropriate behaviour, bullying or harassment are not tolerated and staff deal with any such incidents swiftly.
- The college has a strong culture of promoting safeguarding, which is understood well by staff. Students' safety is at the core of all that the college does. Promotion of safeguarding is central to the overall strategy of the college and is part of the self-assessment process. Training for staff and governors takes place frequently and case studies and role-play are used well to develop understanding. Senior managers are very knowledgeable about safeguarding.
- The college uses its well-developed external links with specialist agencies very effectively to ensure students' safety. Detailed risk assessments undertaken by the college are well informed by specialist agencies.

- A strong focus is placed on promoting and developing safety awareness. Good use is made of discrete CCTV coverage of exposed and high risk areas. Students and staff have a good relationship with the student liaison officer who patrols the college to ensure site safety. Good links with the community police have helped provide information for learners on a wide range of topics, including safety while at college.
- Comprehensive policies and procedures for safeguarding are in place. Policies are clear and reviewed and updated regularly. When tested, they have proved to be thorough and very effective in ensuring a safe environment. Strong and very effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other agencies help inform policy development.
- The college is very effective in identifying early those students who are vulnerable or need support. Support plans are in place for students prior to starting at the college. Good links are in place with feeder schools which are used well to identify students' wider needs. Students value the support they receive from their personal tutors. Good access exists to skilled counsellors, who are experienced at working with young people and providing a wide range of more specialist support.

Area for development

- Students value their tutorials in providing information on staying safe and making healthy life choices. However, they would like more opportunities to introduce their own topics into the tutorial programme.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop safeguarding provision in the college.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Miller
Her Majesty's Inspector