



# Under 18s Policy

## Student Success

### Version 1.0

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# 1. INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

- 1.1 Students at the University are normally aged 18 years or above. Occasionally the University may admit students who are under the age of 18 at the start of their programme of study. The University's Admissions requirements set out that any applicant/student needs to turn 18 by the end of term 1 (with the exception of some courses in the Warsash Maritime School). Therefore, this will be a temporary situation, and these students and their parents should understand that the University predominantly admits students who are over the age of 18 years and that they will be entering an adult environment. This Policy sets out the basis on which University admits students who are under 18 years at the start of their programme of study.
- 1.2 The term "parents" in this Policy includes parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s).
- 1.3 The University recognises that anyone under the age of 18 living and studying in the United Kingdom is legally a child and therefore students under the age of 18 may have additional needs in relation to their wellbeing and require additional support.
- 1.4 The University has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, neglect and harm and will report any suspicion or allegations to the appropriate authorities.
- 1.5 This Policy sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the University, parent and employer (in the case of degree apprentice students) in relation to students under the age of 18.
- 1.6 This Policy applies to all students who are under 18 years of age.
- 1.7 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Safeguarding Policy, Prevent Policy and Code of Practice and First Aid Policy.
- 1.8 This Policy has been informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the University to adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSiE) as it only applies to schools and colleges, due regard has been given to its contents for best practice purposes.

# 2. APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- 2.1 Where an applicant is under the age of 18 on 1 September for the year they are enrolling, the University will require the applicant's parent to sign the Parent Consent Form (Appendix A) when they are accepting an offer from the University. Completing this Consent Form confirms the parent has read and understood the nature of the obligations which the University owes to its students under the age of 18 and the extent of the services available to them.
- 2.2 Please note it is a condition of admission for parents to complete the Consent Form. No applicant under the age of 18 will be eligible to enroll at the University until the Consent Form has been signed and returned.

- 2.3 The University requires contact details of a parent who will be accessible to both the student and the University should the need arise for all students under the age of 18 at the time of enrolment.
- 2.4 The Admissions Team and the Apprenticeships Team are responsible for ensuring that any applicant under the age of 18 on enrolment receives a Parental Consent Form and that it is signed by the parent when they are accepting an offer.
- 2.5 In the event that the Consent Form is not signed a further reminder will be sent. A student will not be able to enroll without the completed form.
- 2.6 The Admissions Team and the Apprenticeships Team will provide details of those students who are under 18 on enrolment to the following members of staff:
- The relevant Head of Department
  - Safeguarding Manager
  - Residence Manager
  - Student Funding Team Leader
  - Student Hub Team Leaders
  - UKVI Compliance and Audit Manager (where relevant)

### 3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- 3.1 Where a student under 18 is an international student and their parent remains overseas, the University requires the details of a guardian who is based in the UK. The University will only be able to register a student once they have provided details of their UK-based guardian.
- 3.2 The University must be able to contact a UK-based guardian who can act on the parent's behalf and be the liaison between the University and the parent if an emergency situation arises or there are serious concerns for the health or wellbeing of the student under 18.
- 3.3 Any adult can be a guardian. Whoever is taking on the role of guardian should ensure that:
- They are able to speak English and are over the age of 18;
  - They will be available for contact throughout the period that the student is under 18;
  - They understand that they will be contacted in case of emergency situations where they will be expected to liaise directly with the parent and may be expected to attend the University or other location where the incident has occurred where this is necessary;
  - That they may need to arrange for alternative accommodation at short notice should the University be closed due to an emergency or in the unlikely event that the student is suspended from the University.

### 4. ACCOMMODATION

- 4.1 A student who is under the age of 18 cannot enter into legal contracts, therefore the University requires a student's parent to honour all obligations under any contracts that the student enters into with the University prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (e.g. payment of accommodation fees due to the University).

- 4.2 Parents should recognise that residential accommodation offered by the University is generally intended for the use of adults.
- 4.3 The University guarantees to provide a room in University owned and managed accommodation for all students who are under the age of 18, providing the student has made the University their firm choice. Students who are under the age of 18 are allocated a room which is en-suite, however communal spaces such as the kitchen are shared with students over 18.
- 4.4 All students are expected to assume levels of responsibility within any hall of residence. However, the following procedures will be put in place for students who are under the age of 18:
- Prior to intake or arrival of new students, the Residence Manager will identify any student who will be under 18 on arrival.
  - If the arrival time is known the Residence Manager (or their nominee) will ensure they introduce themselves to the student/family when they arrive and carry out a tour/orientation of the Hall.
  - If the Residence Manager is not available at the time of arrival, they will ensure they (or their nominee) make contact with the student at the next available opportunity to check they have settled in and offer any further assistance if needed.
  - Students who have been identified as under 18 will have all staff contacts recorded by the Residence Hub team.
  - If there is a Hall or security incident report or welfare concern the Residence Manager (or their nominee) will make a concerted effort to contact the student and will notify the Safeguarding Manager without delay by emailing [safeguarding@solent.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@solent.ac.uk).
  - If it is deemed appropriate the University will contact the student's parents (or UK-based guardian) to advise them of the situation.

## 5. ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Academic departments admitting students under the age of 18 should:
- Identify a named member of staff in the Department who will have responsibility for each student under 18 in the department;
  - Remind all staff of the offence of abuse of position of trust under the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
  - Ensure that members of staff who primarily teach or have significant contact with students under 18 have undergone and passed Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks at 'enhanced' level (this will be arranged through People & Development);
  - Ensure that members of staff who primarily teach or have significant contact with students under 18 have attended the University's safeguarding training and renew this training on a bi-annual basis.
- 5.2 Academic courses are designed and validated to be delivered to students over the age of 18 years. Therefore, they may contain teaching materials that have adult themes.
- 5.3 The Head of Department (or their nominee) is responsible for ensuring a departmental risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that appropriate safeguarding is in place for the

individual student on their course, including any field trips. Once the student reaches the age of 18 this policy will no longer apply.

- 5.4 Departments are responsible for informing Admissions if there are any courses which can no longer accept under 18s and for providing a rationale for this decision.
- 5.5 Where a student under 18 is required to undertake a placement as part of the course of study, appropriate arrangements must be made with the workplace to safeguard the student and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation (such as Health and Safety and Working Time Regulations).
- 5.6 The University believes the professional relationship between a student and a member of staff is an important part of the student's educational development. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which includes members of University staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years old. The University considers this to be a disciplinary issue which may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as well as reporting to the police.

## 6. PROVISION OF IT SERVICES AND INTERNET ACCESS

- 6.1 Internet access at the University is not routinely restricted by parental controls, although access to certain inappropriate websites is restricted centrally. Students under the age of 18 are allowed the same level of access as all other students and are expected to observe the same regulations relating to acceptable use of the internet.
- 6.2 Students are expected to act in an adult and responsible manner when using the University's IT and internet services and are required to abide by the [University's Acceptable Use of IT Policy](#).

## 7. LIBRARY

- 7.1 It is unlawful to supply (e.g. sell or lend) an age-restricted video recording to a person under the age restriction. Consequently, library staff will not lend DVDs/Blu-ray or other video recordings classified as adult to students who are under 18.

## 8. ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

- 8.1 It is illegal for alcohol and/or tobacco to be sold to or bought by students who are under the age of 18 years. The University will take 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 any individual student. The Students' Union is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its own licensed premises and for complying with any restrictions on the sale or supply of alcohol to students who are under the age of 18.

## 9. DATA PROTECTION

- 9.1 Although those under 18 are regarded as children under the law, they still have the right under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 for information about them not to be disclosed without their consent. This means that the University is not able to provide information to parents regarding the student's progress, results or most other personal circumstance without consent, unless there is a significant concern relating to the safeguarding or welfare of the student.

## 10. NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- 10.1 Students who are under the age of 18 are encouraged to join Students' Union societies but are not able to hold elected office until after their 18th birthday (this is because Officers can carry legal responsibilities).
- 10.2 Students under the age of 18 are encouraged to join sports clubs. Any staff or volunteers will adhere to the safeguarding policies and processes for the relevant sport's governing body. If staff who have oversight of the student sports clubs have any concerns about the conduct of or wellbeing of a student under the age of 18, they should report these concerns without delay to the Safeguarding team at [safeguarding@solent.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@solent.ac.uk).

## 11. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- 11.1 At the age of 16, patients in the UK are able to give consent for most medical or dental treatments without a parent's knowledge. Treatment is confidential. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency where a student is unable to consent and it is not possible to contact a parent or UK guardian, the University may authorise emergency medical treatment, acting on medical advice in the best interests of the student. The University therefore requires that parents acknowledge this by giving their general consent for medical treatment prior to the student's registration as contained in the Parental Consent Form (Appendix A).
- 11.2 Parents are responsible for ensuring the University has been informed of any medical conditions of the student.
- 11.3 In the event of a medical emergency on campus which requires an ambulance to attend for a student under 18, the member of staff responsible for managing the incident should notify the Safeguarding team without delay. Further information on how to report any incident involving emergency services is available in the [University's First Aid policy](#).

## 12. APPRENTICE PROVISION

- 12.1 Students under the age of 18 who are degree apprentices remain the responsibility of their employer when they are in the workplace. In the event of a safeguarding concern, it is the employer's responsibility to address the concern using their own policies and processes. The University expects employers to inform the University of any safeguarding concerns for an apprentice under 18 without delay by emailing [safeguarding@solent.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@solent.ac.uk).

- 12.2 It is the responsibility of the Apprenticeships Team to ensure that all employers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities for apprentices under the age of 18 and to ensure that the safeguarding referral process is shared with them.
- 12.3 It is the responsibility of the University's Safeguarding Manager to notify the Apprenticeships Team of safeguarding concerns for any apprentice under the age of 18 who will then assume responsibility for notifying the employer.

## 13. SAFEGUARDING

- 13.1 The University does not have statutory safeguarding duties, but has a [Safeguarding Policy](#). The University recognises its general responsibility to safeguard children from harm and will work closely with statutory agencies to help to ensure that children are not put at risk of harm or abuse. The University recognises that abuse can take many forms and may be physical, sexual, emotional or may arise through neglect.
- 13.2 The University has well established reporting systems for staff to report safeguarding concerns for all students. The physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children is a very serious issue and consequently University staff must report any suspicions or allegations of child abuse to the Safeguarding Manager without delay using the University's [Report + Support system](#).
- 13.3 If the child is deemed to be at risk of harm, then a referral will be made by the Safeguarding Manager to the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or equivalent where that child resides, without delay.



# APPENDIX A

## Consent Form for Parents/Guardians/Carers

It is a condition of enrolment at Southampton Solent University that the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) of any student who is under the age of 18 confirms, by signing and returning the attached Consent Form, their understanding of the arrangements set out in the University's Under 18s Policy.

Southampton Solent University is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students; this duty is enhanced for those students who are under 18 when they enrol.

Parents/guardians/carers should be aware that most University facilities are intended for use by adults (aged 18 and over). Therefore, parents/guardians/carers should accept responsibility for this and ensure that students under the age of 18 years understand and comply with arrangements for younger students.

Before the student can enrol on the course, the parent/guardian/carers must complete this form to confirm that they agree to these conditions.

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Name of Student: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Course Applied for: .....

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the conditions contained in the "University Policy for Under 18s" and I accept responsibility for ensuring that my child understands and complies with them.

I consent to my child studying at the University and give them permission to travel in the UK and live independently whilst undertaking their study.

Prior to their arrival, I will ensure that suitable accommodation has been arranged for my child.

I note that Southampton Solent University will:

- a) not act in loco parentis;
- b) authorise emergency medical treatment for my child if they are unable to give consent and it is not possible to contact a parent/ guardian/carers;
- c) keep this Consent Form in place until my child's 18th birthday.

I agree to take responsibility as follows:

- a) I guarantee that I will honour any contracts entered into by my child with the University until my child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday;
- b) I have advised my child that Southampton Solent University is an adult learning environment with the expectation that all students act responsibly and appropriately;
- c) I will advise the University of any known medical conditions of my child.

Name of Parent/Guardian/Carer: .....

Email: .....

Phone Number: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....