



Independent Listener Policy

Revised: June 2022

Review date: June 2023

Introduction

In compliance with the requirements of The National Minimum Boarding Standards (DfE September 2022) and to help fulfil its wider responsibilities for safeguarding, Oxford Sixth Form College appoints an Independent Listener.

The Independent Listener is a volunteer and liaises with the Vice Principal (VP). The purpose of the post is for someone independent of the College staff to be available to offer emotional support to students *via* telephone or text. Contact may be made by students at any time and the Independent Listener is responsible for making suitable arrangements. The Independent Listener's photo and contact details will be widely displayed on posters around College and College accommodation. A College mobile will be available for the sole use of the Independent Listener.

The Independent Listener is expected to become a familiar figure to students that they will feel able to make contact when they need. To this end it is recommended that the Independent Listener visit College accommodation in the evening at least once each term and visit College itself on a similar basis.

The Independent Listener will be helped to train in Child Protection and Safeguarding and will be inducted by the VP.

The role of Independent Listener is a volunteer post and as such attracts no pay. The College will however reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of the role. Oxford Sixth Form College is committed to the safeguarding of its students and staff. All members of staff must be aware of the Child Protection policy and procedures and must report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (VP).

The specific responsibilities of the post include:

1. Getting to know the College staff and students and the people to whom problems may be referred; communicating highly effectively around the College and externally; seeking support when necessary and supplying information as required
2. Contributing to the College's oversight of safeguarding
3. Listening; offering emotional support; helping students think through problems by discussing them; responding to concerns; offering advice about College procedures and ways to handle situations; sign-posting to help-lines; in emergency arranging for assistance
4. Agreeing boundaries and confidentiality with the VP, so that the Independent Listener is able to support students impartially while also supporting the College; recognising that confidentiality is overridden by specific Child Protection concerns
5. Being aware of the policies and procedures that the College adopts and working within their framework
6. Undertaking any training desired or requested, especially Safeguarding training
7. Meeting the VP or, in the absence of the VP, the Heads of Houses once every term.