

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr M Hopkins
Principal
South Birmingham College
High Street
Digbeth
Birmingham
B5 5SU

Dear Mr Hopkins

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 4 October 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 South Birmingham 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 good practice

- A well-embedded culture of ensuring that individual students are safeguarded along with promotion of a safe and healthy environment, both of which are endorsed at all levels of management and supported by all staff.
- Placing students' safety and their well-being at the heart of college policies and procedures.
- Thorough planning to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, including pre-16 learners, within an inclusive environment and supported by the development of strong partnerships and networks.
- Extensive safeguarding training which ensures all staff understand their role in safeguarding individual students.

- High awareness shown by students for their own safety alongside good understanding and appreciation of the actions that the college takes to keep them safe.
- High expectations of students' behaviour. Students are educated to develop independence and to make decisions which promote their own and others' safety. Students behave well, feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices.
- High levels of individual support for students. The tutorial curriculum is well developed and resourced. It focuses on developing individual students' decision-making skills which are seen by the college as fundamental to safeguarding. Students are encouraged to discuss, debate, and reflect on the full range of 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.
- Comprehensive health and safety and risk assessment processes along with a proactive approach to providing effective and supportive site security arrangements.
- Extensive policies, procedures and educational resources in place to reduce the risks associated with using the internet.
- Extensive and effective safeguarding procedures which are integral to the selection and recruitment of staff.

Areas for development:

- ensuring that all students are aware of safety-related enrichment activities, such as those that take place in 'Freshers' Week'.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop safeguarding provision within 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Anne Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector