West Thames College
Health & Safety Policy

Section 1: Preface

As Principal I am fully committed to excellence and continuing improvement in the management of health and safety. I recognise and fully accept my individual role and responsibility in providing health and safety leadership for the College.

The College has adopted a pro-active risk assessment approach to managing health and safety. We will assess and manage any hazards identified and, where reasonably practicable to do so, will reduce the risks as far as possible in accordance with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on "Sensible Risk" Management.

Whilst we can be rightly proud of our health and safety record it is important that we strive to continually improve. Curriculum Directors, Managers and Support Service Managers have a key role in this by carrying out risk assessments for their areas of responsibility in order to identify, record and control any significant risks within both curriculum and support services.

However, success in managing health & safety clearly involves all College employees.
Consequently, I expect every member of staff within the College to be fully committed to health and safety and demonstrate this commitment by:

- taking reasonably practicable care of their own health and safety and that of others to whom they may have responsibilities or a duty of care,
- reporting any health & safety issues or hazards they are unable to resolve themselves to their line manager,
- co-operating fully with the College's laid down health and safety policies, procedures and instructions and;
- attending organised health and safety training courses.

By these actions we will not only avoid accidents but also bring about continuing improvements in our overall performance and meet our associated legal, moral, social and economic responsibilities.

Signed…….. Marta Gajewska (Principal)

Date……

Section 2: Health & Safety Policy Statement

2.1 Introduction

This policy updates and replaces the College's previous Health and Safety policy issued in June 2025. It defines the personal and collective health and safety responsibilities of Governors, Executive Team, Directors of Departments, Managers, Employees, Students and our Partners and Contractors.

2.2 Policy Statement

- West Thames College is committed to ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees, students and other persons who may be affected by the activities and the services it provides and controls. The responsibility to meet this requirement is considered at least equal to that arising from any other College business objective.

- The Executive Team, (ET) led by the Principal, is collectively and individually responsible for providing leadership on health and safety throughout the College. The Executive Director of Resources is nominated on the ET to act as health and safety "champion", in line with the HSE and Institute of Directors' guidance on Health & Safety Leadership.

- Each Executive Member is responsible for implementing this Policy within their area of responsibility. All Managers are required to manage health and safety to meet the requirements of this policy and their defined responsibilities under it.

- The College will develop and maintain its Health and Safety Management System to meet the principles of the Health & Safety Executive's document; "Managing for Health & Safety" (HSG65).

- As a minimum standard the College will comply with all relevant statutory duties and legal requirements. However, where reasonably practicable to do so, best practice will be adopted in order to further minimise risks to health and safety and prevent injuries and other losses.

- The College is committed to identifying and controlling hazards by risk assessment. Where necessary written safe working methods, based on risk assessment, will be introduced to fully inform those involved and control unavoidable risks.

- An annual health & safety development plan will be agreed for the College. Progress and achievement of health and safety objectives will be reviewed annually as part of a College-wide health and safety management performance review.

- All members of staff are reminded that they have legal obligations to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

- Staff are reminded to draw to the attention of their Departmental Director, Manager or Supervisor any difficulty experienced in meeting their personal health and safety responsibilities. Any failure to meet stated responsibilities may result in disciplinary action being taken.

- In the face of a hazard that gives rise to an imminent and significant risk of harm, individuals are required to remove themselves and anyone in their charge from the situation and report directly to their line manager.

- This policy will be reviewed as necessary in consultation with staff and workplace representatives. Any changes to it will be made available to all contracting agencies, partners and others affected by it.

- The Governing Body and the Executive Team have endorsed this policy for adoption throughout the College.

The College has a separate Health & Wellbeing Policy which can be found here –

Link to Health & Wellbeing Policy

Chair of Corporation: Stuart McGeoch

Signature:
Date:

Principal: Marta Gajewska

Signature:
Date:

Staff Side Representation:

Signature:

Date:

Executive Team Members

Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality): Katrin Lehmann

Signature:

Date:

Executive Director Resources
Signature:

Casey Mack
Date:

Executive Director of Finance, HR & Development: Mark Cooper

Signature:

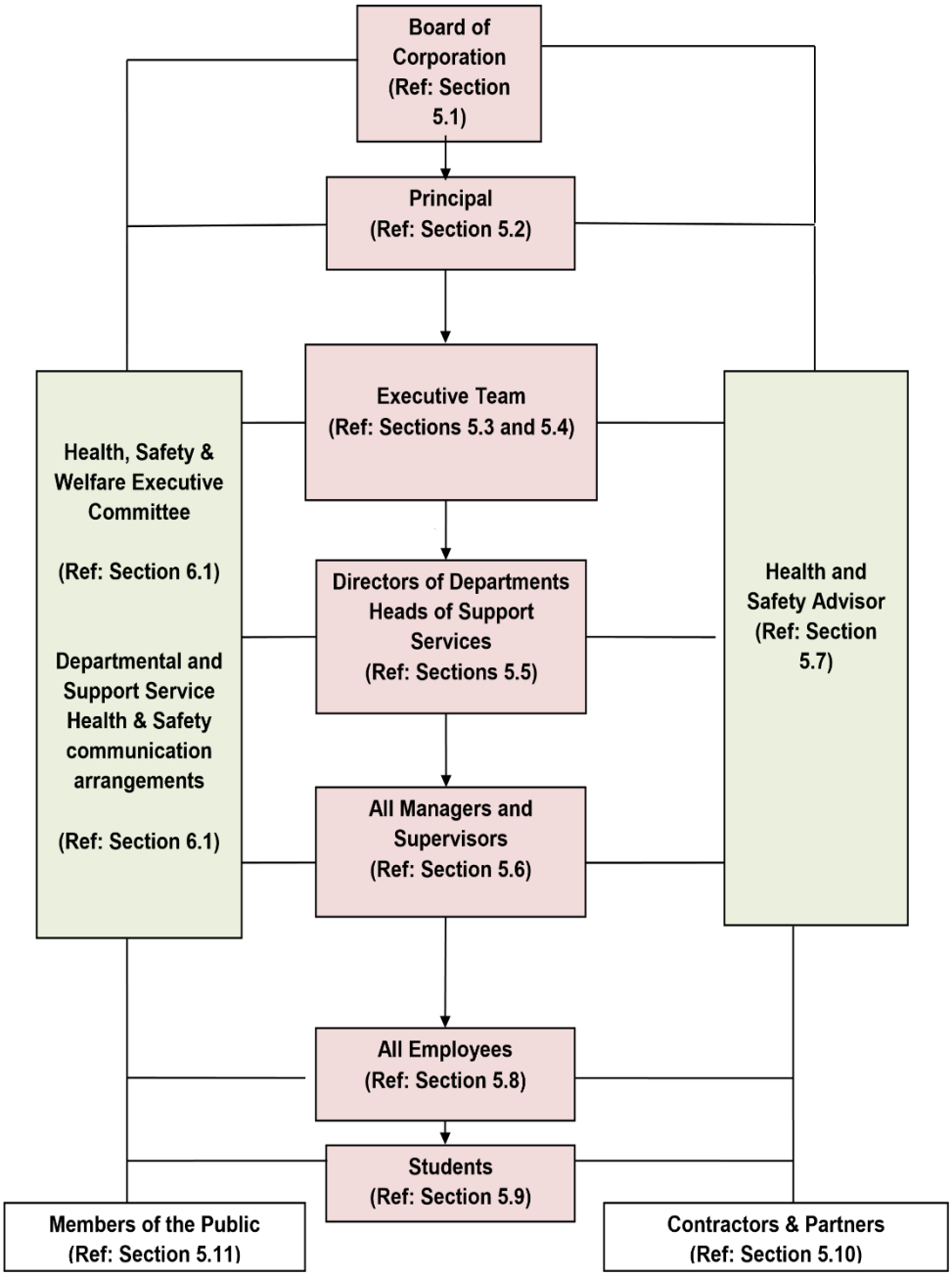
Date:

Section 3: Aims

The aim(s) of this Policy are to: -

1. Allocate responsibilities for health & safety throughout the College
2. Reduce accidents and ill-health and minimise loss.
3. Support the College's Development Plan and Objectives
4. Support the Government's targets in reducing accidents, injuries and ill-health at work.
5. Generally, support the College's Ofsted and other regulatory assessments.
6. Continually improve the health and safety culture of the College.
7.

Section 4: Organisation for Health & Safety Showing Lines of Responsibility & Communication


Board of Corporation (Ref: Section 5.1)
Principal (Ref: Section 5.2)
Executive Team (Ref: Sections 5.3 and 5.4)
Health, Safety & Welfare Executive Committee (Ref: Section 6.1)
Departmental and Support Service Health & Safety communication arrangements (Ref: Section 6.1)
Directors of Departments Heads of Support Services (Ref: Sections 5.5)
All Managers and Supervisors (Ref: Section 5.6)
Health and Safety Advisor (Ref: Section 5.7)
All Employees (Ref: Section 5.8)
Students (Ref: Section 5.9)
Members of the Public (Ref: Section 5.11)
Contractors & Partners (Ref: Section 5.10)

Section 5: Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Corporation

The Board of Corporation recognises its responsibility to provide strategic health and safety leadership for the College. The Chair of the Governing Body is appointed as lead Governor for health and safety.

5.2 Principal

The Principal accepts overall responsibility to ensure this Policy is implemented throughout the College.

5.3 Executive Team (ET)

Individual Members of the ET accept responsible for implementing this Policy within their service and collectively as the Executive Team to ensure its college-wide implementation and success.

Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):

- To maintain and support a written up-to-date Health & Safety Policy Statement.
- To assign health & safety responsibilities for all levels of management.
- To allocate necessary resources to undertake health & safety related work.
- To provide a working mechanism for consultation and communication with the Unions and workplace safety representatives on health & safety issues. (6.1 refers).
- To carry out an annual review of health and safety performance; supported by the Head of Estates and Facilities
- (6.2 refers).
- To agree an annual Health & Safety Development Plan for the College. (6.3 refers).
- Setting a personal example and promoting a positive College-wide health & safety culture.

5.4 Executive Director of Resources

Whilst not detracting from the responsibilities of the Executive Team, the Executive Director of Resources accepts responsibility as 'Health & Safety Champion' on behalf of the ET to ensure Health & Safety Risk Management issues are properly addressed by the Executive and across the College.

Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):

- To ensure that reports on the performance of health & safety are presented to top management (ET) for review and as a basis for ongoing improvement.

- To act as "champion" for health and safety matters strategically across the College.

5.5 Directors of Departments
Heads of Support Services

Directors of Departments and Heads of Support Service are required to comply with the College's Health and Safety Policy and to ensure all college-wide health and safety policies and procedures are implemented within their area of responsibility.

Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):

- Establishing an appropriate means to enable regular consultation and communication of health and safety to take place with staff. (6.1 refers).

- Reviewing the health and safety performance of their department or service annually to provide data for the College-wide health and safety performance review. (6.2 refers).

- Integrating Health and Safety objectives for their department or service as part of the College's annual Development Planning process. (6.3 refers).

- The identification, assessment and control of significant workplace and curriculum-based risks. (6.4 refers).

- The reporting of accidents and incidents and their subsequent investigation and the monitoring of accident trends. (6.5 refers).

- Arranging an annual programme of workplace health and safety inspections for their department or service and to ensure that any required corrective action is implemented. (6.6 refers).

- Allocating necessary resources within their control to undertake health & safety related work.

- Ensuring that all required health & safety records are maintained.

- Identifying, (in addition to any college-wide emergency procedures), the need for any specific Curriculum or Support Service emergency/contingency arrangements for the workplaces, staff groups, students and others they are responsible for.

- Ensuring that the induction of new (and transferring) staff and students includes key areas of health and safety.

- The identification of staff safety training needs for health and safety (via the risk assessment process and the College's Staff Appraisal Scheme).

- Bringing to the attention of their line manager any health & safety issue they are unable to resource or resolve.

- Setting a personal example and promoting a positive health & safety culture within their department or Service and College-wide.

5.6 <u>All Managers & Supervisors</u>
<u>(and staff with responsibilities for employees, students or others)</u>

All staff who have responsibility for employees, students, contractors, partners or members of the public are required to implement and promote this Policy.

<u>Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):</u>

- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed and routinely reviewed, in consultation with staff and others who may be affected.

- Producing and reviewing local operational safe working procedures and codes of practice, based on risk assessments, as may be necessary to control the hazards identified.

- Ensuring all staff and students are fully aware of safe working practices, risk assessments and laid down emergency/contingency plans (e.g. fire evacuation) and receive appropriate instruction and training to ensure compliance and continuing awareness.

- Identifying staff health & safety training needs via the College's risk assessment process and the Staff Appraisal Scheme.

- Providing staff and students with the necessary induction/training/instruction to complete any task they are required to carry out.

- Accurately recording and promptly reporting all safety related incidents; e.g. injury accidents, near misses etc. via the College Incident Reporting Procedures.

- Investigating accidents or incidents and implementing any remedial actions necessary to prevent a recurrence.

- Ensuring that all Work Equipment and any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is risk assessed, properly selected, used, inspected/tested and maintained.

- Providing the necessary levels of supervision for staff and students for any work, tasks or services under their control.

- Maintaining all required health & safety records.

- Incorporating health and safety as a standing agenda item at Team Meetings at least once a term so that relevant operational health and safety issues can be discussed.

- Bringing to the attention of their line manager any health & safety issues they are unable to resource or resolve.

- Setting a personal example and promoting a positive health & safety culture within their department or service and College-wide.

5.7 Health and Safety Advisor

The College employs a Head of Estates and Facilities who is appointed as the competent person to provide the College with health and safety advice, guidance and support.

Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):

- The drafting, issue and review of all corporate health and safety documentation as part of the College's Health and Safety Management System.

- Providing advice and support to the College on the management and maintenance of its health and safety management system.

- Providing advice and support to managers on the risk assessment process.

- Assisting the College in the drafting of an annual management review of health & safety performance and the production of a College Health & Safety Plan.

- Advising on the health and safety training needs for the College in support of the Health and Safety Policy.

- Completing a regular analysis/review of accident/incident data to identify trends for action by the College.

- Setting a personal example and promoting a positive College-wide health & safety culture.

5.8 All Employees

The College undertakes to provide all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety of its employees, volunteers and those affected by its activities. No person is required to carry out work on behalf of the College unless they are fully aware of the nature of the risks and have received appropriate instruction in the proper safe-working procedures.

The College requires all employees, whether permanent, temporary, agency etc. to comply with and promote the College's Health and Safety Policy and related procedures.

Specifically, this includes (but is not limited to):

- Taking reasonably practicable care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their activities or for whom they may have a special duty of care.
- Co-operating with the College's health and safety arrangements and procedures and to adhere to all safe working methods as instructed.
- Attending health and safety training (or completing on-line training) as may be required.
- Carrying out a visual check on the safety of any work equipment prior to use.
- Promptly and accurately reporting to their line manager all incidents, accidents, hazards or defects, failures of work equipment/safety procedures or any health and safety concerns they may have.
- Familiarising themselves with the College fire procedures and the locations of the emergency evacuation routes, temporary safe refuge areas, exits, fire alarm call-points and external assembly points.
- On hearing the fire alarm, to immediately leave the building they are occupying (and instructing those in their charge to react accordingly) in order to make their way directly to the designated assembly point.
- Removing themselves, and those in their charge, from any situation, as soon as practicably possible, where there is an imminent risk of significant danger or injury, and report directly to their line manager.

  The College emphasises that no employee is required to continue working where there is imminent danger of injury or ill-health.

5.9 Students

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing of all learners is a fundamental core value for West Thames College. The College demonstrates this by ensuring all learning takes place within a safe, healthy and supportive environment, so far as is reasonably practicable to do so.

In helping the College maintain a safe and healthy learning environment all students are required to:

(a) Observe the College Health and Safety Policy and comply with other health and safety procedures brought to their attention as part of their induction or learning.
(b) Not to interfere with, or misuse, any equipment or appliances provided for health and safety purposes.
(c) Report any injuries, ill-health or "near-misses" to a member of staff.
(d) Observe and follow all safety related notices and signs displayed throughout the campus.
(e) Make sure they are aware of and understand what to do in an emergency
(f) Familiarise themselves with the College emergency fire evacuation procedure and the locations of the emergency exits, fire alarm call-points and the buildings' external assembly points.
(g) On hearing the fire alarm, respond immediately, by leaving the building by the nearest available exit, reporting to the designated assembly point and only returning once informed it is safe to do so by a member of staff.
(h) Use any safety related equipment, or personal protective equipment, e.g. protective masks or gloves, as directed to do so.
(i) Immediately contact a member of staff for direction if they are concerned, or in any doubt, as to what is safe.

Failure to comply with the college's laid down health and safety procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken.

5.10 Contractors and Partners

The College provides educational and other services in partnership with many other service providers. As such it recognises the joint responsibility it has to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of its own employees, those working on behalf of the College, service users, students and members of the public who may be affected.

In fulfilling this responsibility, the College will ensure that all relevant health & safety information is provided to its contractors and partners prior to any contract commencing. All service providers are required to maintain an appropriate health and safety management system to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and control the risks associated with the service provided.

Consequently, this Policy and details of arrangements affecting their safety will be made available to contractors and other relevant partners.

5.11 Members of the Public & Service Users

The College recognises its duty of care to members of the public and service users who may be affected by the College's activities and services.

The College will conduct all its activities, as far as is reasonably practicable, in such a way so as not to expose those members of the public and service users to risks to their health and safety.

In fulfilling this duty, the College will ensure that risks are properly assessed and appropriate precautions and monitoring systems are put in place to safeguard those who may be affected. Where appropriate the College will provide relevant information, to those affected, on the risks present and the controls in place to minimise them.

The College will ensure that where any risk concerning the health and safety of a member of the public or service user is brought to its attention, the issue will be immediately investigated and, where reasonably practicable to do so, appropriate changes made to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Section 6.0
Management Arrangements to Implement this Policy

The College has adopted a number of health and safety management arrangements to implement the requirements of this Policy. These are detailed in various associated health & safety policies and procedures that are available from the Connect Document Library. Specific attention however is drawn to the following:

6.1 Health and Safety Consultation and Communication

- The College operates a consultative health and safety committee (The Health, Safety & Welfare Executive Committee). The Committee enables staff and student health and safety consultation and communication on matters affecting the College. The terms of reference for the committee/group can be found on the Connect Document Library.

- Directors and Heads of Support Services will make arrangements so that routine team meetings in their department or service incorporate health and safety as a standing agenda item. This will be at least once a term, so that relevant operational health and safety issues can be discussed e.g.

- risk assessments and risk control,
- hazard information,
- refresher and revision sessions on the college's emergency procedures,
- review of any incidents that have occurred,
- communicating required health and safety procedures,
- forthcoming Educational Trips and Visits and a review of those completed.

6.2 Review of Health & Safety Performance

A review of the College's Health and Safety Performance will be completed annually on behalf of the ET and the Board of Corporation by the Head of Estates and Facilities.

Directors and Heads of Support Service will provide the necessary data to inform the review as may be appropriate.

6.3 Planning for Health & Safety

As part of the College's development planning cycle, an annual health and safety plan will be drafted by the Head of Estates and Facilities on behalf of (and for agreement by) the Health, Safety & Welfare Executive Committee and the ET**.** Progress in achieving the objectives/targets in the plan will inform the annual College Health and Safety Performance Review.

Directors of Departments and Heads of Support Services are required to incorporate health and safety objectives within their annual development plans.

6.4 Risk Assessment

The College requires that all managers arrange for and complete the necessary general risk assessments for the curriculum or support service they are responsible for. To assist with this the College has a General Risk Assessment Framework in place that can be found on the Connect Document Library.

Training on the risk assessment framework is available via the College's Professional Development Coordinator.

To ensure that the College focuses on "real" risks we have adopted the HSE's "sensible risk assessment" approach to risk assessment. (See appendix 1).

Specific Risk assessments will also be completed where they may be required to control a defined risk area. The following are typical of the risk areas that will require assessment. Further information on these assessments is available on the Connect Document Library.

- **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**
- **Manual Handling Operations**
- **Substances Hazardous to Health**
- **Personal Protective Equipment**
- **New and Expectant Mothers**
- **Young Workers**
- **Off Campus Educational Trips & Visits**

6.5 Health & Safety Training

The College has developed a number of corporate on-line health and safety training programmes. These include:

- **College Health & Safety Awareness (CHASA)**
- **DSE guidance and risk assessment (WorkRite)**
- **Fire safety (FireRite)**

Completion of these courses is mandatory for all staff. Periodic refresher training is also required.

In addition, specific risk-based health & safety courses are arranged throughout each academic year as may be appropriate. These include, for example:

- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**
- **Leading off-site Educational Trips and Visits.**
- **Manual Handling Operations**
- **Use of Evacuation Chairs**
- **Fire Extinguisher training**

Specific health & safety training for curriculum and support staff is arranged by the department concerned, in consultation with the Professional Development Coordinator, according to the competency needs/requirements of the service area.

6.6 On-line Accident & First Aid Reporting Procedures

The College has an on-line accident reporting procedure in place that also incorporates a first aid treatment record. The procedure ensures we can comply with our responsibilities to report major and time-loss incidents to the HSE and to monitor and investigate incidents in order to prevent a recurrence.

The accident reporting procedure is available via the Connect home page through which accident and first aid reports can be completed and sent directly to the College's Head of Estates and Facilities for further investigation or action as may be required.

6.7 Monitoring for Health & Safety

The College has a monitoring procedure in place that requires managers of all Curriculum and Support Services to arrange an annual health and safety inspection to be completed of the work/teaching areas under their control.
An annual inspection of all communal areas is completed by the Estates Department.

The procedure is available on the Connect Document Library.

Section 7.0
Operational Risk Control Procedures and Policies

The College has agreed various health and safety risk control procedures and policies to manage specific college-wide operational risks. These are available from the Connect Document Library.

Specific attention is drawn to the following:

- Fire plan and Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Management of Fire Policy
- Personal Emergency Escape Plans (peeps) Procedure
- First Aid Procedure
- Pregnancy Risk Assessment Procedure
- Off-Campus Educational Visits Policy
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Procedure.
- Driving the College Minibus Procedure
- "Lock-Down" Procedures
- Legionnaires' Policy
- Lone Working Policy

Sensible Risk Management

Sensible risk management is about: -

- Ensuring that our staff, students and the public are properly protected.
- Providing efficiencies to the College by balancing benefits and risks, with a focus on reducing significant risks – both those that arise more often and those with serious consequences.
- Enabling innovation and learning, not stifling them.
- Ensuring that those who work with unavoidable risks manage them responsibly and understand that failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to serious consequences.
- Enabling individuals to understand that as well as the right to protection (from hazards) they also have to exercise individual responsibility.
- When talking about risk this involves both physical and mental harm.

*Sensible risk management **is not** about: -*

- Reducing protection of people from risks that can cause real harm and suffering.
- Avoiding or stopping important recreational and learning activities for individuals where the risks are, or can be, managed.
- Creating a totally risk-free organisation.
- Scaring people by exaggerating or publicising trivial risks.
- Generating mountains of useless paperwork.