

Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) Mentorship Programme Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

IFST is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all participants in the mentorship programme. This safeguarding policy outlines our approach to protecting mentors and mentees, ensuring professional boundaries, and responding to concerns appropriately.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Protect mentees and mentors from harm, abuse, or inappropriate behaviour.
- Set clear guidelines for conduct within the programme.
- Establish procedures for reporting and handling safeguarding concerns.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all mentors, mentees, IFST staff, and any third parties involved in the mentorship programme.

4. Safeguarding Responsibilities

- IFST will provide guidance and training to mentors on safeguarding best practices.
- Mentors and mentees must adhere to the code of conduct outlined in this policy.
- A designated Safeguarding Officer within IFST will oversee safeguarding matters.

5. Code of Conduct

To maintain a professional and safe environment, all mentors and mentees must:

- Communicate respectfully and professionally.
- Avoid personal relationships beyond the mentorship scope.
- Use approved communication channels (e.g., email, professional platforms, or IFST-approved systems).
- Ensure meetings take place in appropriate settings (e.g., public spaces, virtual platforms, or workplaces, never private homes).
- Maintain confidentiality unless safeguarding concerns require disclosure.

6. Safeguarding Training and Support

- All mentors will receive basic safeguarding guidance as part of their onboarding process.
- IFST will provide resources on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- The Safeguarding Officer will be available for support and queries.

7. Reporting Concerns

- Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the IFST Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Reports can be made [via the anonymous online form](#).
- IFST will investigate all concerns confidentially and take appropriate action.
- If a concern involves immediate danger, appropriate external authorities will be contacted.

8. Responding to Safeguarding Issues

- IFST will take all concerns seriously and ensure they are managed in line with UK safeguarding laws and best practices.
- Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible, except where disclosure is necessary for safety.
- Appropriate actions may include mentoring support changes, reporting to external agencies, or further investigation.

9. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to reflect legal and procedural updates.
- Feedback from mentors, mentees, and stakeholders will inform future safeguarding improvements.

10. Contact Information

For safeguarding concerns or further information, please contact:

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