



# Inspection Report on

**Atlantic College**

**St Donats Castle**

**Llantwit Major**

**CF61 1WF**

## **Date Inspection Completed**

17/05/2023

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## About Atlantic College

|                                                            |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of care provided                                      | Boarding School                                                                          |
| Registered Provider                                        | UWC Atlantic College                                                                     |
| Registered places                                          | 400                                                                                      |
| Language of the service                                    | English                                                                                  |
| Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection                | 26 & 27 October 2022                                                                     |
| Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer? | UWC Atlantic College is an international college and does not provide services in Welsh. |

### Summary

UWC Atlantic College is one of eighteen schools and colleges provided by UWC (United World Colleges) for international pupils between the ages of sixteen and nineteen years. Students board at the college for a two year period during their education. The school's Principal is Naheed Bardai.

Inspections of the college have previously taken place with Estyn Inspectorate in January 2022, where significant concerns were identified in relation to the safeguarding of boarders. A further inspection in October 2022 found these concerns had been addressed and a review of systems and processes had taken place. This inspection has been undertaken following a request by Welsh Government for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn Inspectorate to undertake a focussed inspection to consider the progress made in response to previous inspection recommendations, relating specifically to safeguarding and the implementation of procedures and practices.

We found the leadership and governance arrangements in place support improved oversight of the college. There is clear direction and guidance to ensure the systems, policies and procedures are embedding in practice and a shift in the culture of the college to prioritise the well-being of boarders and keep them as safe as possible. The designated safeguarding person (DSP) has continued to identify improvements to current safeguarding systems with the support of a dedicated team of staff. Improvements have been made to boarding houses and there is an ongoing plan for refurbishment and upgrade to the existing houses. We identified areas for consideration to make further improvements in relation to auditing and managing information held on the record management system; strengthening the relationship with the local authority safeguarding team, to ensure reporting and

response to referrals are undertaken in a timely manner. To continue to develop and provide opportunities for improved communication and engagement with parents.

## Well-being

Boarders have a voice, are listened to, and can express their views and contribute to decisions about college life. They are encouraged to participate and represent their views through college student council groups. These forums provide opportunities for boarders to be represented, contribute, and share their views. They are influential and help inform college standards and expectations, within clear parameters, and contribute to decision making. Boarders are actively encouraged to develop personal and mutual responsibility and respect. They understand boundaries and the expectations of them in relation to their behaviour on campus and in the community.

Boarders receive support to achieve their well-being. They have access to services to support their health and this has been strengthened with the appointment of an additional registered nurse and a health care assistant to provide support to boarders seven days a week. Health clinics are held twice a week with appointments available with a general practitioner (GP). Boarders are supported by their tutors and house mentors who promote a range of healthy habits and lifestyle choices. Boarders self-administer their own medication following an assessment by the college nurse and GP. House mentors told us they have oversight of boarder's medication and auditing arrangements are in place and agreed by the college nurse. There are two counsellors available to boarders who provide support and respond to any concerns they may have. The college has recently appointed a clinical psychologist to lead on pastoral care and to consider the well-being and emotional support for boarders. They will provide additional oversight of boarders who have more complex support needs. Peer mentors provide support to boarders to listen, advise and escalate concerns or complaints and provide an additional gateway for boarders to access support services.

Boarders value their learning and education and take pride in being part of an international community. They have access to a broad range of activities to promote their physical health and well-being and this is reflected in the college's foundation principles and curriculum. Boarders with additional learning needs are assessed and receive increased support, including boarders who are adapting to education in a second language. At the time of our visit, boarders were completing their summer examinations and preparing for the end of year celebrations. Boarders were engaged in supporting these arrangements and making plans for their return the following academic year or for onward studies.

College houses are clean, comfortable and have been subject of an ongoing improvement plan to renew and refurbish facilities for boarders to support their overall well-being.

## Care and Support

Boarders are provided with opportunities to receive information and understand the college's ethos, values, rules, and expectations in preparation for their arrival at the college. We heard from boarders they had written information and met with college tutors 'virtually' which helped them understand and familiarise themselves with college practices. Their first week was a planned 'orientation week' to help them settle into college life. International boarders told us this helped them prepare, adapt, and learn about each other's cultures, background experiences, and differences in the laws and culture of the UK.

The safety and well-being of boarders continues to be prioritised with newly developed systems, policies and procedures being embedded into practice. There is a clear emphasis on ensuring boarders are safe and concerns raised by boarders are responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures. Welfare plans are in place for each boarder and are completed within the first month at college by their house mentor. They contain information about their health and welfare needs, support strategies and agreed outcomes. Individual risk assessments are in place and completed by the well-being team to provide guidance to support boarders and the action required to ensure they are kept safe. These are logged onto the electronic recording system and shared with house mentors and night wardens.

The supervision of boarders has continued to improve. Boarders are clear about the expectations for them to comply with college rules, for example, their return to the college campus and boarding houses at specific times for 'check in' to ensure their safe return. Concerns about boarders noted on their return to college are identified by night wardens and escalated to house mentors. Action is taken, including disciplinary action, where students have not adhered to rules around areas such as alcohol consumption. College staff and student representatives are present during most social events, creating a safe space for all boarders and providing choice on how they wish to spend their free time. Boarders actively risk assess their own student led activities and events which are signed off by tutors to ensure they are safe. Although some boarders feel this practice is restrictive, they understand this in the context of ensuring their safety.

Boarders understand the college's behaviour policy, how this is implemented and the sanctions for breaching the rules. We heard sanctions are now more consistently enforced and boarders are more accepting of changes and understand the rationale for restrictions to ensure their safety. They understand bullying and how to raise concerns for themselves and other boarders. A student disciplinary board provides a student perspective on breaches in behaviour, although staff retain decision making responsibilities and members undertake an oath of confidentiality. From our review of electronic records, allegations by boarders are given consideration and action taken, which includes contacting parents with more serious issues. Boarders told us the DSP talks to them about their personal and collective responsibilities. *"Peer pressure is about respect. Everyone knows we are a diverse group...students are respectful and don't want to over step boundaries."*

Boarders are allocated a tutor and receive support in tutor groups of approximately ten boarders. They meet weekly for open and more focussed discussions and told us they discuss issues such as consent, sleep hygiene, bullying and, more recently, micro aggression. These also provide opportunities to reflect on college policies and expectations of boarders.

House mentors clearly demonstrate their commitment and understanding to ensure the best possible care for boarders with an awareness of safeguarding practices and policies. They are clear about how issues and concerns are reported and escalated through a shared electronic recording system. House mentors told us the boundaries and rules for boarders were clear and understood and there had been a shift in boarder's accepting and taking responsibility to ensure they comply with college rules. There is improved recording of information and oversight of some boarders who show concerning behaviours and subject of the highest disciplinary sanctions.

Arrangements for boarders to receive support at night is undertaken by night wardens. Night wardens are based at the entrance of the college and complete checks and assist boarders on request. They also provide support for boarders who access the well-being centre and remain with them during their stay. Night wardens log and have access to the electronic recording system so can access information about boarders. We heard night wardens undertake a more pastoral role and boarders told us they know them and they are part of their college support system. There are three night wardens on duty at any one time and some consideration should be given to increasing the number of night wardens to ensure there is sufficient support for boarders across the college campus at night and on weekends.

The college has eight boarding houses with each house accommodating approximately fifty boarders. The standards of the houses vary and are dependent on the age of the property. There is a programme of improvement in place with some scheduled work being completed or at the planning stage. One house is currently not in use as is waiting to be refurbished. Two houses have been refurbished, with one house re-opening last term. Each house has two house mentors with their accommodation being annexed to the house. However, Whitaker House has a separate house for the house mentor which is in adjacent property. A second property is planned to be used for the second house mentor from the next academic year.

Boarders told us they develop relationships with others who also board in their houses and this creates a smaller, supportive community and sense of belonging. They mostly remain in the same house for their time at the college. Improvements to facilities in some houses have been welcomed, including the installation of laundry facilities in each corridor of Whittaker House, as recommended at our last inspection. Communal areas have been repainted and refreshed and furniture replaced which has created a more inviting environment for boarders to relax and spend time together.

Boarding houses generally provide a comfortable standard of accommodation. Each house has its own kitchen area for boarders to make simple meals and snacks, with food being provided by the college. There is a communal lounge, a study room, bathrooms, and laundry facilities in each house. Some of the houses provide a gender neutral bathroom to support equality and diversity. Boarders can access a small patio area with seating after 'check-in' at night but are restricted to this area which is under CCTV (closed circuit television) surveillance.

## Leadership and Management

The senior leadership team have demonstrated accountability and taken action to make improvements to safeguarding practices. They are working to embed and develop a culture which supports boarders to keep them safe. There are high expectations on staff to ensure their engagement with boarders supports agreed conduct and behaviour, including increased responsibility for their supervision. The ethos of the college is underpinned by empowering boarders to promote their personal and social responsibility and well-being. Whilst boarders are supported to be vocal and challenge, decisions are underpinned and guided by staff. Staff have clearly defined roles and understand their safeguarding responsibilities within their assigned tasks. Arrangements for recording information have been streamlined and this has enabled information about boarders to be shared and tasks allocated to designated staff to complete. However, there is a need to strengthen the management of this information by ensuring records are reviewed and updated. Staff told us they are confident in the current system, there are no areas of uncertainty or '*grey areas*' with clear leadership and direction from the college Principal.

Policies in safeguarding and behaviour management reflect information about current processes but some further consideration to current terminology should be considered as part of ongoing review and development. The DSP ensures action is taken where safeguarding concerns are identified and escalates these, where appropriate. They told us the well-being team meet weekly and is attended by the two head of years, school counsellors, the head of boarding and by the newly appointed clinical psychologist. This ensures information and concerns are shared about individual boarders and identifies any safeguarding or behavioural issues and actions to be taken. There is an ongoing cycle of weekly meetings, including well-being meetings which take place with tutors and house mentors and provides a platform to share information. As this has developed, a more strategic approach and delegation of tasks has meant a more even distribution of work to enable the DSP to continue to identify and strengthen systems where this has been identified as in need of improvement. This has included the head of year 'triaging' concerns and advising the DSP of more serious concerns. Some more focussed work is planned to consider and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

Safeguarding reports are submitted to the local authority safeguarding team, although the college needs to be pro-active to avoid delays in receiving a response to ensure clear decision making takes place. Where concerns regarding staff are identified, appropriate advice is sought and action taken. The DSP told us the college is developing links with the local police via a PCSO (police community support officer) with development work in progress.

College staff attend an orientation prior to the start of term which includes on line and face to face training with a focus on the well-being of boarders and safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff have received training on safeguarding. House mentors are supported

by the head of boarding. This position will become a full time post from the next academic year and we heard this was to further develop their role and the support for house mentors.

Communication with parents is under review to provide opportunities to engage with parents and to make the senior leadership team accessible. The principal told us the college have arranged 'town hall' consultation meetings to take place approximately four times a year, which provides an open forum for discussions. These are virtual meetings to include all international parents and a campus based reception is also available to parents prior to the admission of their child to the college. We were told that boarder's identified tutors are the first point of contact for parents and house mentors are available to discuss any issues or concerns. If appropriate, more serious issues would be escalated to the well-being team. Feedback from parents indicate they feel positive about their child's experiences at the college. They recognise improvements have been implemented to keep their children safe and with the majority of parents stating they would recommend the college. Some comments reference the need for the college to improve communication with parents so they can feel assured that issues, including safeguarding concerns, are addressed and actions taken. However, the college and DSP need to ensure sensitive and confidential information is managed carefully and according to college policies and protocols.

| National Minimum Standards |                                                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Standard                   | Recommendation(s)                                          |
|                            | No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection. |

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