

Safeguarding Children

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Rationale

The British School, Alexandria fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse or neglect
- Supporting a pupil who has been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

Procedures

We will follow the procedures and guidance set out by the Department for Education in the UK. The school will ensure:

- Heads of School (HoS) will undertake regular (at least every 2 years), appropriate training for this role;
- All members of staff will report any suspected abuse of children in the first instance to the Head of School or in the absence of the Head of School to the Principal;
- Every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and members of the Governing Body understand their responsibilities in being alert to suspicious behaviour, signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to a HoS;
- Safe recruitment practices are always followed.

Our procedures will be reviewed every two years and up-dated in accordance with current legislation and UK guidance. When staff join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding children arrangements in place.

Managing a disclosure

Teachers and other staff in schools are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with students. If a child discloses directly to a member of staff, the following procedures will be followed:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- Try to refrain from displaying any emotional or judgmental reactions to disclosures, maintaining a calm, reassuring and positive demeanour.
- Ask only open questions such as:
 - ‘How did that happen?’
 - ‘What was happening at the time?’
 - ‘Anything else you want to tell me?’
- Do not ask questions which may be considered to suggest what might have happened, or who has perpetrated the abuse, e.g. ‘Did your Dad hit you?’
- Do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person.

Following a disclosure, the member of staff should talk immediately to their HoS and complete a written record.

Information sharing and confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to an individual child's welfare are confidential. The HoS will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. The HoS will also inform the principal of more serious cases. All staff must be aware that they can never promise a child to keep secrets.

Record Keeping

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns should be recorded using the school's safeguarding children recording system. All records of a child protection nature should be passed to the HoS.

Supporting Children

We recognise that children who are abused, neglected or have witnessed violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the student through:

- the content of the curriculum

- the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment to give pupils a sense of being valued
- the school behaviour policy which aims to support vulnerable pupils in the school and ensures all pupils understand that some behaviour is unacceptable
- providing a range of support structures in the school including: buddying, extra-curricular clubs, etc

In addition, the child can be given the UK ChildLine number of 0044 800 111111, which is accessible from outside the UK. ChildLine also operates an online counselling service through their website www.childline.org.uk using message boards, chat and e-mail.

Supporting staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the HoS and to seek further support as appropriate.

Allegations against staff

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Principal. If the allegation is against the Principal then the Chair of governors should be informed.

The Principal on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Governing Body and ask a Head of School to carry out an investigation. In very serious cases where there is a significant possibility of further harm to students, the member of staff might have to be suspended with pay until the investigation has been completed.

Where a member of staff was dismissed as a result of a serious allegation that was substantiated, the school would notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Precautions

Staff should not be with a student by themselves in an office / classroom with the door closed and no other member of staff in the vicinity.

Staff should use school email addresses and phone lines to contact students and not student email addresses or mobile phones. Similarly they should not accept students as friends on facebook and other social media sites.

Whistle blowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of a colleague. Staff would normally raise concerns with their Head of School or Principal but if a member of staff feels uncomfortable in doing so, then the member of staff should contact one of the governors of the school.

Complaints or Concerns expressed by Pupils, Parents, Staff or Volunteers

We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end any expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.

We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the school will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The school will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our students by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to
- ensure children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in distress
- include in the curriculum opportunities to equip children with the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Abuse of trust

We recognise that as adults working in the school, we are in a relationship of trust with the pupils in our care and acknowledge that it is a criminal offence to abuse that trust.

Racist incidents

All staff will be watchful for incidents of racism between pupils or colleagues. The handling and reporting procedures are the same in all aspects of safeguarding a child's wellbeing.

Bullying

All staff will be watchful for incidents and positively promote strategies to manage bullying. If bullying occurs staff will follow the procedures set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy. Positive behaviour strategies are reinforced continually through the Golden Rules, PHSE, Circle Time and during Tutor sessions and school assemblies.

E-safety

Our E-safety policy recognises that internet safety is a whole school responsibility (staff, pupils, parents).

Children and young people may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly, when using the Internet and other technologies. Additionally, some young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal.

We therefore recognise our responsibility to educate our pupils, teaching them the appropriate behaviours and developing the critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and within legal boundaries when using the Internet and related technologies. These issues are addressed within the curriculum, by the class teacher and in assemblies.

Health and safety

Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school undertaking school trips and educational visits.

Badges / Lanyards

All staff, governors and visitors will be given lanyards and badges. Staff are expected to challenge any person on the school campus without a lanyard/badge.

Designated Child Protection Persons

The designated persons are the three Heads of School.

Staff Training

The designated persons will receive update training every two years.

All other staff including the principal will receive training every three years.

Governor involvement

There will be a safeguarding governor.

The relevant governor's committee will have an annual agenda item in the Summer term to review the school's safeguarding policies and procedures together with the application of these policies/procedures in practice.

IMPORTANT

It is important to note that in this culture there still prevails a more traditional attitude to using physical violence as a form of punishment. Students who have not performed well in a test might be punished physically at home; students who have misbehaved at school and admonished by the teacher might receive yet further (physical) punishment at home. Therefore, the usual understanding by teachers of their students and their circumstances is even more vital at our school. Teachers might, in some cases, decide not to send home, for example, results of a spelling test or to ring home about a discipline issue. Teachers should always seek the advice of their HoS if at all concerned that contacting parents might have a negative impact on the child.

Supporting documents

- Student files
- Staff files

Related policies

- 3.2 Teacher standards
- 3.3 Employment practices
- 3.4.1 CRB/DBS
- 3.4.2 Recruitment of ex-offenders
- 3.4.3 Secure storage & handling

This policy has been discussed and agreed by The British School, Alexandria Board of Governors.

Appendix I: Categories of Abuse and Signs of Possible Abuse – see next page.

Appendix I: Categories of Abuse

There are four categories of abuse and children can suffer from one or any combination of these. Abuse can take place anywhere where children spend time. It can happen to babies and children regardless of age, sex, race or disability. In almost all cases the abuser is someone known by the child.

1. Physical abuse happens when:

- someone physically hurts or injures a child by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, or attempting to drown or suffocate them.
- someone harms a child by giving them substances such as alcohol, or inappropriate drugs.

There are, of course injuries to children which are not abuse. A parent or older child may cause injury by accident e.g. when playing football. What matters is whether the child is knowingly put at risk or whether enough attention has been given to the child's safety.

2. Sexual abuse involves:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- making a child observe inappropriate sexual behaviour or showing a child pornographic books, videos or photographs or inappropriately discussing sexual matters.

3. **Emotional** abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill- treatment or rejection that is likely to have a serious effect on the child's development. It includes:

- the persistent denial of love and affection
- persistently shouting at, threatening or demeaning the child or over protecting
- preventing the child from having friends or taking part in normal activities.
- persistently causing humiliation.

4. **Neglect** occurs when:

- their basic needs are not being met, including inadequate diet, denial of necessary health care or being inadequately dressed.
- left unsupervised in situations which represent possible dangers, whether at home or elsewhere. • left alone when it is inappropriate
- there is inadequate concern for their physical or emotional development.

Signs to look out for

In considering whether a child is suffering some form of abuse, look for physical and behavioural signs. Your knowledge of a child will help when considering the significance of changes in behaviour or physical appearance. Most children get cuts and bruises as part of their daily lives and this makes it difficult to spot non-accidental injuries. Look out for **injuries** :

- Injuries which the child cannot explain or the explanation is inconsistent or unconvincing. • Injuries that are inadequately treated or not treated at all.
- Injuries on parts of the body less likely to receive an accidental injury, such as cheeks, chest , thighs, or stomach.
- Hand or finger mark bruising
- Cigarette burns or human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalding

Look out for **unusual behaviour** such as:

- Not wanting you to contact their parent
- Aggressive behaviour or outbursts of temper
- Not wanting to go home
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get undressed for PE
- Depression or moods which are out of character
- Excessive fear of making mistakes
- Compulsive nervous behaviour
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

Also look out for the following **physical signs**:

- being hungry, sometimes stealing food
- being uncared for; frequently dirty or smelly or inappropriately dressed • untreated medical conditions;
- being tired all the time
- frequently absent from school
- a failure to grow and thrive
- the start of a speech disorder

Behavioural signs to look out for:

- Changes in behaviour that are sudden and unexplained
- Showing fear of someone
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
- Reluctance to get undressed for PE.