

**The International**  
school & community college

*Unlocking Potential*

# **Child Protection Policy**

**Reviewed: November 2011**  
**Date of Next Review: November 2012**

## Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools

To demonstrate best practice schools should :

- Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
- Work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- Be vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so the information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
- Monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping in a secure place clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences and attending case conferences;
- Provide and support Child Protection training regularly to school staff and in particular to designated teachers to ensure their skills and expertise are up-to-date, and ensure that targeted funding for this work is solely used for this purpose;
- Contribute to an inter-agency approach to Child Protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
- Use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others;
- Provide clear policy statements for parents/carers, staff and pupils on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the school's approach to bullying;
- Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
- Take particular care that pupils with SEN in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills;
- Have a clear policy about handling allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures;
- Have a written whole school policy, produced, owned and regularly reviewed by school's staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards.

The International School and Community College is concerned that all its pupils remain safe and free from harm and is committed to playing a full and active part in the multi-agency response to Child Protection concerns.

All children have an absolute right to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. All members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) have a responsibility to be mindful of these issues related to children's safety and welfare and a **duty** to report and refer concerns, however minor they may appear to be. NB: it is not the role of school staff to investigate those concerns.

We recognise that parents have a right to be informed of any concerns about a child's welfare or any action taken to safeguard and promote a child's welfare, providing this doesn't compromise the child's safety. Children are best protected when professionals work effectively together and share responsibility for protective action.

If we receive information about a child which suggests he/she has been abused, neglected or that it is likely, we have a duty to refer these concerns to Social Care/Family Services or the Police. The school has no discretion in this matter. In these circumstances the Birmingham City Council Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures apply.

The Child Protection Procedures for this school are in accordance with the Birmingham procedures.

However, things may not always be clear cut, in which case staff will consult with colleagues from an appropriate agency which will usually, but not always, be Social Care/Family Services. Advice and guidance will be sought in this case, meaning that those working with children have ready access to consistent information and advice from suitably qualified and experienced staff, in order to explore a situation and to decide together on an appropriate course of action. This should not be seen as a way of transferring ownership of a "problem", unless this is the agreed outcome of the discussion, when a referral will be made.

It is important to remember that a referral or consultation with Social Care/Family Services is an expression of concern about a child's welfare. It is not an accusation or a presumption of responsibility about a parent or carer.

In the course of an investigation, social workers or the police may wish to speak with a child, without parental knowledge or consent. The Head Teacher, acting in "loco parentis", has the discretion to agree to allow this to enable the authorities to explore concerns and determine whether there are grounds for further action. In these cases the Head Teacher will ensure that the child's welfare is secured and he/she has access to a trusted adult.

The Head Teacher will not allow a child to be removed from the school premises without either:

- Parental consent;
- An Order of the Court or a police Protection Order.

We have a statutory duty to work to the guidelines stated in the *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF, 2007)* including the recruitment of anyone who will work in a school.

In addition, the school has a duty to safeguard and protect the well-being of children and is committed to act in accordance with the locally agreed Child Protection procedures in cases where there is concern of significant harm.

Significant harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development of a child or young person. Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health includes physical and mental health. This is viewed from the perspective of normal behaviour for a child of a similar age and understanding.

The International School and Community College is constantly vigilant to deter possible abusers and will manage effectively any allegations or concerns about abuse when they arise.

When a child makes an allegation about abuse or neglect they will be listened to, have their comments taken seriously and, where appropriate, the allegations will be investigated thoroughly. It is not the role of school staff to undertake any such investigation.

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety, health and guidance by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance. We believe in open and honest communication with parents and carers and will always share with them any information or concern about their children at the earliest opportunity. The only exception to this would be where it is felt that such a communication might compromise a pupil's safety.

If a pupil is felt to be in need of protection and becomes the subject of a Child Protection plan, parents/carers should regard the school as a source of help and support.

The International School and Community College fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support the pupils in our school. The following categories of abuse are recognised for the purposes of a Child Protection register:

1. **Neglect** - persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold, starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of child care. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs;
2. **Physical injury** - actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation, hitting, shaking, burning or scalding;
3. **Sexual abuse** - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child and/or their involvement in inappropriate sexual activities;
4. **Emotional abuse** - actual severe adverse effect on emotional behaviour of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy:

**PREVENTION:**

- Through the creation of an open culture which respects all individuals' rights and discourages discrimination and bullying of any kind;
- Through a positive school ethos, teaching and pastoral support to pupils;
- By identifying a member of staff with overall responsibility for Child Protection who is supported by other designated child protection staff, known as named persons;
- Through our pastoral team and form tutors, offering all pupils an opportunity to talk and discuss any worries or concerns;
- Through PSHE, SSEAL and an ongoing programme of support, at an age-appropriate level to promote self-esteem and social inclusion and address the issue of Child Protection in the wider context of child safety in general.

**PROTECTION:**

- By following agreed procedures ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.

**SUPPORT:**

- By working to support any pupil or member of staff who may have been abused and by working to support parents or carers.

This policy applies to teaching and non-teaching staff, and to all others working within school.

**School Commitment**

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering, abuse.

We will therefore:

- Work hard to establish and maintain an ethos where our pupils feel safe, secure and are encouraged to talk and be listened to;
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Include in the core and enhanced curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE and SSEAL which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe and develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life;
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies.

## Framework

We do not operate in isolation. The welfare of pupils is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies and the voluntary sector. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion. Child Protection is the responsibility of everyone.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard children, however there are key people within schools and the local authority that have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. During school time the designated person responsible for Child Protection is **Ann Heath**. Additional advice and guidance may also be sought from Mark **Garside**, **Mike Hall**, or **Helen Seickell**. The named governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection is **Steve Harber**. His role is to liaise with the named persons on school staff on all matters relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection, participate in the annual review of policy and procedures and make an annual report to the full governing body. All named staff and governors have had access to training in Safeguarding, Child Protection and safer recruitment procedures.

In the event of any concern by any member of staff, or if any member of staff is approached by a pupil regarding any matter concerning abuse, they must tell the pupil that they are bound to share the information. All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions. In the first instance this should be the Head Teacher or, in their absence, one of the other named persons above.

Because of the day-to-day contact with children, schools are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Parents/carers will be made aware that, where it appears to a member of staff a pupil may have been abused, the school is required to report their concern to Social Care/Family Services.

## Procedures

Where it is believed a child is suffering from, or is at risk from, significant harm we will follow the procedures below which are guided by the **Birmingham City Council Safeguarding Board**.

Teachers' responsibilities:

- To be vigilant in order to identify potential incidences of abuse;
- To report immediately to the designated named person/s;
- To complete documentation for external agencies as appropriate;
- It is not the teacher's role to investigate suspected abuse but rather to recognise it and refer it as appropriate to the designated person/s.

Designated named person/s:

- To co-ordinate actions in the school and liaise with agencies over suspected or actual

cases of child abuse;

- Identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral to ensure that staff observe and implement school's agreed procedures;
- To facilitate training for all staff and governors;
- To authorise referral in consultation with the Child Protection officer to the relevant and appropriate authority;
- To keep full records of reports/referrals made.

### **Professional Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with the pupils in school, particularly in the context of Child Protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is the benefit of the child.

All personal information should be treated as confidential and particular care taken with sensitive information. Information must be treated on a "need to know" basis. Relevant factors include:

- What is the purpose of the disclosure?
- What is the nature and extent of the information to be disclosed?
- To whom is the disclosure to be made (and is the recipient under a duty to treat the material as confidential)?
- Is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of a pupil to whom the confidential information relates?

The child must not be asked leading questions. The teacher/school must not undertake an investigation but seek clarification from the pupil.

No pupil should be promised that anything they say will be kept confidential if the matter is related to Child Protection or abuse. It is helpful for a member of staff to tell the pupil that they will record anything the pupil says to ensure an exact record as possible is kept for future reference.

If an incident happens outside the normal school hours or on an out of school activity and the named person/s are unavailable, the teacher/staff member must contact the relevant agency as soon as possible to ensure the safety of the pupil. The designated named person/s should be informed as soon as possible afterwards. Relevant information should be recorded at the time with full details of the concern.

### **Safe School, Safe Staff**

There are issues to be considered that all staff need to be aware of, to ensure the safety of both staff and children;

- Staff must always avoid inappropriate physical contact with pupils;

- Staff should avoid being left alone in a room with a closed door with just one pupil;
- If a pupil needs with complex health needs requires assistance to wash / change clothing or to be changed due to them wetting / soiling, staff will ensure that another member of staff knows they are about to undertake the task and wherever possible an additional member of staff will be present. Such tasks should be carried out with consideration of school's Intimate Care Policy and in line with the pupil's care plan. The door to the toilet will not be locked but kept slightly ajar whilst preserving the pupil's right to privacy;
- School staff should avoid discussing, counselling and/or giving advice to pupils about sexual matters except in the agreed context of planned SRE delivery where parental permission will have been obtained. All staff should be aware of school's SRE policy which details the DfE statutory requirements of such education and the content ratified by the Governing Body.

### **Allegations made against staff**

Regrettably, sometimes allegations of abuse may involve a member of the school staff. In these circumstances the allegations must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately. On receipt of such an allegation the Head Teacher will contact the Local Authority Designated Person. If the allegation concerns the Head Teacher, the member of staff receiving the allegation must contact the LADP as a matter of urgency. Additionally, the chair of governors, must be informed. (Contact details are held in the administration office.)

### **Training and Support**

We will ensure that the Head Teacher, designated named staff and governor attend Child Protection training relevant to their role. School staff will also receive basic Child Protection awareness training and be kept informed through dissemination and INSET.

### **Recruitment**

The International School and Community College operates safe recruitment procedures in line with the document Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (January 2007) and Local Authority guidelines to ensure that, where appropriate, checks are carried out on all new staff and volunteers who work with children. This includes Criminal Record Bureau checks and registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Anyone who is not prepared to cooperate with these procedures will not be considered for employment within the school.

All childcare organisations, which includes schools, have a statutory duty under the Protection of Children Act 1999 for the following:

- To refer names to the Secretary of State in certain specified circumstances for possible inclusion on the PoCA List;
- When recruiting, checks must be made through the Criminal Bureau to check whether an individual is included on the PoCA List or List 99. (These lists contain records of individuals who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children);
- Not to employ a person if they are registered on either of the above lists;
- To cease to employ a person if it is later discovered that the individual is included in either

of the above lists.

From January 2010 it became mandatory that at least one person on any appointments committee should have completed the Safer Recruitment training. Details of all staff and governors who have completed this training is held in the office.

### **The Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the handling of personal data. Essentially, this is information kept about an individual on a computer or in a manual filing system. The Act lays down requirements for the processing of this information which includes obtaining, recording, storing and disclosing it.

If making a decision to disclose personal data the Data Protection Act 1998 must be complied with. This includes eight data protection principles. There should not be an obstacle if:

- There are particular concerns about the welfare of the pupil;
- If information is disclosed to social services or to another professional organisation e.g. Police;
- The disclosure is justified under the common law duty of confidence.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others (including social services depts), must always, however, have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information. Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case according to the particular facts of the case and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

### **Records and Monitoring**

Well kept records are essential to good Child Protection practice. Staff will be informed about the need to record any concerns held about a pupil or pupils within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

Records kept concerning Child Protection are kept in a separate and securely locked cabinet. The Head Teacher will ensure that staff are informed of the contents of reports and other confidential issues on a need-to-know basis, although the overriding principle is the safety of pupils. All records are confidential.

Anyone requesting access to records must first consult with the Head Teacher who will allow access only if it is deemed appropriate. A record of all access will be maintained to provide an audit trail.

## **Attendance at Child Protection Conferences**

A Child Protection conference may be convened by social services to which all involved agencies would be invited.

Where a case involves a pupil in our school a representative is usually invited to attend the meeting. The Head Teacher or other designated person may attend – the choice of this representative will depend on the circumstances of each individual case.

Staff may be requested to provide a report for a Child Protection meeting. Any report should be relevant, concise and professional. All reports should be submitted in the first instance to the Head Teacher or, if not available, one of the other named persons with designated responsibility for Child Protection in school.

All staff that are required to attend such meetings, prepare reports and maintain relationships with parents during and after a referral has been made will be fully supported by staff with specialist Child Protection training.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other related safeguarding policies.

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