



Child Protection Policy

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1 The BST Child Protection ethos

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. This policy applies to all children and young people.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents/carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

1.1 At the BST we are committed to Child protection through the following means:

- **Training:** We will ensure that all staff and others associated with the school are aware of the nature of child abuse, along with the associated definitions and potential risks.
- **Reporting Procedures:** We will ensure that staff and others associated with the school are aware of what steps to take in response to possible abuse and the correct procedures to follow when recording information.

- **Action:** We will ensure through the use of designated safeguarding officers that all cases are responded to as soon as possible and that the appropriate action is taken to support and protect our students.

2 Aims and Objectives

The school recognises that abuse, and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.

2.1 The school aims are:

- To provide a safe environment for children to learn in;
- To establish what actions the school can take to ensure that children remain safe at school;
- To raise the awareness of all staff to these issues, and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;
- To ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues;
- To set down the correct procedures for those who encounter any issue of child protection.

2.2 The school and its employees will also ensure that they:

- Take seriously any concerns raised, whether by adults or children;
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns;
- Support children, staff and other adults appropriately and effectively in any process of investigation;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

Any person who works with children should be aware of the possibility that a vulnerable or 'at risk' child may choose them to be the first point of contact. It is therefore important that all employees are fully aware of the procedures and guidelines relating to reporting and investigation.

2.3 The academic director will ensure the following:

- That the senior management team adopts appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children in the school;
- There is a named designated safeguarding officer (Lead);
- There is a named deputy safeguarding officer;
- That the DSL and DSD have sufficient time and resources to handle CP business;
- That the school will do all it can to ensure that all those working with children in school are suitable people. This involves scrutinising applicants, verifying their identity and qualifications and obtaining references, as well as CRB/DBS (or equivalent) checks.

2.4 The Safeguarding Officers will ensure the following:

- That these policies are implemented by all staff;
- That this policy and procedures, along with Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 guidance is provided to all staff on induction.
- That all staff complete a Safeguarding and child protection course– in addition there will be regular safeguarding and child protection updates (via e-mail and staff meetings), as required, and at least once per term;
- That sufficient resources and time are allocated for staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
- That all staff and adult helpers in the school are able to voice their concern if they feel that a child is vulnerable, or that there are any particular practices that are unsafe;
- That the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk;
- That all staff, both, teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection;
- That the school Safeguarding policy is updated annually.

The safeguarding role is guided by two principles:

- In accordance with the Children Act, the welfare of the child is always paramount;
- Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

All staff have a responsibility to report to the designated officer any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care.

2.5 Further support and considerations

- **PSHE:** The teaching of personal, social and health education, as part of the curriculum helps to develop appropriate attitudes in children, and it makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them, including aspects of bullying as part of our overall safeguarding approach.
- **SEN:** For children with special educational needs or disabilities, all staff need to recognise that they can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist which make it more difficult to recognise signs of abuse. Extra care should be taken to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly. The designated safeguarding officers will work alongside the SEN officer if necessary, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.
- **E-Safety:** Staff should be made aware of the school's E-Safety Policy with regards to child protection and overall safeguarding procedures.

3 Training and Support

3.1 The school will undertake to ensure that all staff:

- Are provided, through training and support, with the necessary skills to recognise children who are at risk or potentially at risk;
- Are familiar with, understand and abide by the Codes of Conduct (see Point 4 below);
- Fully understand the systems and frameworks through which concerns may be raised and addressed;
- Are aware of the mechanisms by which this policy and its associated procedures will be applied and monitored and where the levels of accountability lie.

4 Codes of Conduct

4.1 All staff, governors and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Have a child/children with whom they are working visit or stay at their home alone;
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour that may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

4.2 It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these;
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks;
- As far as possible, be visible to other adults when working with children;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged;
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

4.3 In general it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you;
- Give students your personal email address or personal telephone number, interact with them via social media or become Facebook friends. Electronic communication between staff and students should be via the school email system;
- Take children in your car unless specifically requested to by the Head of Primary or Secondary, Academic Director or Financial Director.

5 Definitions and signs of abuse

5.1 Forms of Abuse/ Risks/Specific Safeguarding Issues:

At BST we are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Children can abuse other children. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via this peer on peer abuse. These could include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying;
- Physical abuse;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

The more commonly referred types of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse may involve the hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, hair pulling or otherwise cause harm to a child;
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the that they are worthless or unloved;
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. This includes non-contact activities over social media or the internet, such as showing children pornography as well as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them;
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This involves failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs, such as not providing proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see to the emotional well-being of the child;
- Peer-to-peer abuse, including any form of teasing or bullying whether physical, emotional or online (cyberbullying) . Please see the Whole School Anti-Bullying policy.
- Sexting: sending indecent images of oneself or others or sending sexually explicit messages. If a member of staff becomes aware of this, they should follow the guidelines stated here for dealing with any other form of abuse. The Safeguarding officer will take the necessary steps to investigate the incident and will refer to the local police for further investigation, if necessary. In order to protect children from sexting, PSHE will include discussions with students on this topic.

5.2 Other forms/harmful situations

While the above are the 4 broad main areas of potential abuse, abuse itself can take many forms, many of which have either an emotional, physical, sexual or neglectful impact (or combination of more than one of these). Some examples of these harmful situations are listed below (note: this is not an exhaustive list).

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and should therefore be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding policies. There is recognition that this is a cultural practice in

some countries but is potentially harmful to children both emotionally and in terms of health issues.

- **Forced Marriages (FM):** Although not apparent within our current setting, it is important to note that the FM is a marriage conducted without consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. FM is illegal in the UK, U.S.A and in most European countries. The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that recognises child, early and forced marriages as involving violations of human rights.
- **Safeguarding pupils who are vulnerable to extremism:** The BST values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against moral principles.
- **Self-Harm:** Self-harm can take a number of physical and/or emotional forms. Self-harm is often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions and a way of coping; so whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously. Any suspected case of students self-harming must be referred to the DSL who will consider next steps. Young people will sometimes go to great lengths to cover self-harm scars or injuries and/or will explain any self-harm as accidents. There are some common themes that may help staff identify concerns including:
 - Physical indicators: cuts, bruises, burns, bald patches.
 - Emotional indicators: depression, sudden weight loss, unusual eating habits, isolation or withdrawal.

6 Reporting Procedures

If staff suspect that a child in their class/care may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should immediately inform the DSL about their concerns. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse, which a child gives them.

6.1 Action to take if as a member of staff, you receive an allegation of abuse of a child:

- **Stop and listen to what you are being told.** Responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse of a child immediately takes priority. Where possible during

any disclosure try to listen, allow silences and try not to show shock or disbelief.

- **Take notes of what is said**, as it is being said – if it is not possible to take notes at the time, make notes immediately afterwards. Keep the notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, whatever subsequent reports may be written. Try to stay calm, make no judgements and empathise with the child. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing by telling you. Make sure to record exactly what the child says and not your interpretation of what is said. Use exact words where possible. Record the time date and place as well.
- **Do not promise confidentiality** or agree to “keep it a secret”. Action will have to be taken if you believe that any child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Try to be clear to the child about what you think will happen next. You can assure the child or anyone else giving you information that you will only tell those you have to tell to try to get the matter dealt with. You can and should express support for the child or person giving you information in getting the matter sorted out.
- **Avoid asking leading questions** like “Did he/she do X to you?” but open questions like “Can you tell me what happened?” Ask only what you need to know to ascertain whether abuse may have taken place and be aware of cultural sensitivities. You do not need full details. Avoid expressing opinions beyond the facts. Leading questions and anything likely to suggest ideas or interpretations could damage subsequent investigations. Try not to criticise the alleged perpetrator, as this may be a family member whom the child will still have feelings for.
- **Report:** Where a student makes any disclosure or where you have concerns for any reason, it is very important that the procedures outlined in this policy are followed.
- **Consider whether a child now needs immediate protection** (this decision should be taken by the Academic Director in consultation with the DSL). Consider both the child who has told you of concerns, and any other child, in the light of what you have been told or suspect. Initiate or take the necessary temporary protective action – e.g. by staying with the child on site until satisfactory arrangements for the child are made. You can ask and take into account the child’s wishes about any immediate protection. You should aim to transfer protection of any child into the normally expected arrangements as

soon as you are satisfied these are safe. Outside support should be sought from the local Social Services, or the police if deemed necessary. The Safeguarding Officer will do this after consultation with the Academic Director. If a member of staff is concerned and would prefer to approach the authorities directly, they must inform the Safeguarding Officer and the Academic Director, either before or after doing so, who will support their decision.

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The Academic Director/Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether:

- The allegation or suspicion appears to be seriously meant
- If true, it would constitute or seriously risk a child suffering, or being likely to suffer significant harm
- The actual or likely harm is of a sexual, physical, emotional or neglect nature, sufficient to affect the child's normal physical, sexual, emotional, educational or social development. Remember, even if there are doubts and whether or not you personally believe it - the benefit of the doubt must always be in favour of making the report.
- **Do not reveal details of the allegation or identify the staff or individuals concerned** what you have been told or what you suspect – that may put a child at further risk. Child Protection issues should remain confidential to those designated as responsible for dealing with them. An individual member of staff who has heard a child's disclosure may feel under pressure from colleagues to explain but should be aware they are under a contractual obligation to maintain the circle of trust.
- **Do not investigate the case yourself.** Discuss the allegation or suspicion immediately with the nominated DSL. They will determine the next steps.

6.2 Action to take if as a member of staff, you observe abuse whilst it is taking place in this school

You must do all you can to stop the abuse immediately without putting yourself or the person being physically, sexually or emotionally abused at further risk. Inform the perpetrator of your concerns. Advise them to stop the action immediately. Ask them to remove themselves from the area to one without contact with children and young people. Advise them that you will immediately be informing the appropriate authorities.

- If they fail to desist – ring or call for help.
- If they do desist, accompany the victim to a place of safety away from the perpetrator and leave them in the care of a responsible adult.
- Inform the Academic Director/DSL immediately of the action you have taken and why. Inform them of the actions you now need to take in accordance with the above procedures.

Physical Restraint

- There may be times when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain children and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention will always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation and must follow the guidance given in the most recent documents from the DFE <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0077153/use-of-reasonable-force-advice-for-school-leaders-staff-and-governing-bodies>
- The Principal will require the adult(s) involved in any such incident to report the matter to him or her immediately.

Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation is made against a member staff (or a volunteer helper), The Academic Director will lead the investigation. In the case of the allegation being made against the Academic Director, the Board of Governors will investigate. If it is felt, after these initial investigations, that a further enquiry is needed, then the member of staff will be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. However, it is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the

school will do all it can to balance the interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe.

Confidentiality

The school will regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. Information will be passed on to appropriate persons only at the discretion of the Academic Director.

Records

All records relating to child protection will be secured appropriately. Such information will be held electronically within a secured file on Office 365. Only DSLs and the Academic Director will have access to the file.

When a child leaves the school paper records will be sent to their new school via courier to ensure safe delivery of same (or by registered post). Electronic records will be sent in an encrypted e-mail. A phone call will be made to the new school to ensure records have been received and to allow for any exchange of information between the two educational centers.

When a new child arrives at the British School of Tenerife a written request for copies of their files is sent to their old school.

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