



Child Protection Policy

1. The Law and Child Protection

As mandatory under NY State Law, members of the school professional staff are required to report any signs of maltreatment, abuse, or neglect.

Title Six of Article Six of the Social Services Law, specifically Sections 411-428, define child abuse and maltreatment. The law also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) regarding investigations, outcomes and records.

2. Definition of Abuse

Child abuse takes a variety of forms:

- Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm.
- 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 situations, such as showing children pornography.
- 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 feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see the emotional well-being of the child.

Possible Signs of Abuse or Neglect could include:

- Bruises or burns
- Ripped clothing
- Significant changes in expected behaviour
- Inappropriate touching or statements
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Erratic and volatile actions
- Lack of interest or engagement



3. The School's responsibility for Child Protection

All adults working at The British International School of New York (BIS-NY) should be aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil, both physical and emotional, inside and outside school. This involves ensuring that pupils are protected from significant physical or emotional harm and that there is a positive commitment to ensure the satisfactory development and growth of the individual. Everyone working at BIS-NY should be aware of and, when necessary, follow the school's Child Protection Guidelines. All employees are required to report to the State Wide Central Register (SCR) in the event that they *suspect* child abuse or neglect.

4. Purposes and Aims

In line with Every Child Matters, BIS-NY wants the pupils in its care to:

- Be healthy
- Enjoy their lives
- Achieve economic well-being
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Stay safe

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that Child Protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child.
- Ensure that parents are aware of our policies and procedures.
- Make clear our commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures.

5. Child Protection in School

- The School must provide a safe environment. The Headmaster is responsible for this aspect of child protection through its Works, Maintenance and Health and Safety programmes.
- The School must promote satisfactory development and growth is ensured by providing intellectual and physical challenge through the development of a sound curriculum policy that will that will promote the welfare and safe guarding of children. The School aims to create an environment within which children feel comfortable and know how to discuss such matter within a culture of strong pastoral support.
- The School is also bound to take reasonable measures to safeguard the emotional welfare of its pupils from bullying or abuse within the school.



6. Staff responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to ensure all of the following:

- that the Board of Directors adopts appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children in the school;
- that these policies are implemented by all staff;
- that sufficient resources and time are allocated for staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
- that all staff receive training on appropriate behaviour and actions that reduce risk and harm to any pupil;
- 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 all Staff are adequately trained not to ask leading questions and are aware of our Anti-bully Policy.

There is a named person designated as the Child Protection Coordinator. This is normally the Headmaster, but he may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances. In the event the Headmaster is unavailable, the Deputy Head will act as Child Protection Coordinator. The Coordinator is guided by two principles:

- In accordance with the New York State Social Services Law, the welfare of the child is always paramount.
- Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

A key role of the Coordinator is to be fully conversant with the procedures of the Social Services Law and to ensure that the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The Coordinator must also make sure that all staff, teaching and non-teaching are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The Coordinator will work closely with Social Services, when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved will handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, remembering all the time that the interests of the child are of paramount importance.

All staff have a responsibility to report to the Headmaster or Child Protection Coordinator any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care.



7. 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. We follow the guidance given in the DfES circular 10/98 on The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. The Headmaster will require the adult(s) involved in any such incident to report the matter to him or her immediately, and to record it.

8. Employment and recruitment

We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with children in our school are suitable people. This involves scrutinizing applicants, afterschool instructors, and other agencies connected with the school by verifying their identity, obtaining references, fingerprinting and obtaining comprehensive background checks. This involves CRB checks for all UK staff appointments.

9. Training

All adults working at BIS-NY will be given a briefing on the child protection policy and procedures. This includes the briefing of new staff as part of their induction after arrival at the School and refresher training for all staff at yearly intervals. Part-time and voluntary staff who work with pupils will be made aware of arrangements.

Training for the Child Protection Officer is up to date with local procedures and is updated at least every two years.

10. Allegations against members of staff, volunteers and the Headmaster

Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Headmaster. An allegation of abuse by a teacher or volunteer will be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with child protection procedures. An allegation against the Headmaster should be notified to the governor responsible for child protection (Bill Mules) and the Chair of Governors without notifying the Headmaster first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset. Sensible precautions will be taken to prevent false allegations being made.

Where child protection concerns involve a member of staff, these will be thoroughly investigated by the relevant agencies. Pending a full investigation, the member of staff may be suspended from duty. In cases where a member of the boarding community is suspended pending a full investigation, alternative accommodation will be necessary away from children. Staff may also face disciplinary action where,



after investigation, serious concerns remain, even though external agencies may have decided that they are not able to proceed any further with the case.

The School will notify the police of any allegation involving a member of the teaching staff, particularly if the member of staff resigns or is dismissed, and will report to the appropriate safeguarding authority all concern within a 30 day period.

11. Confidentially

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. We pass information on to appropriate persons only; however we cannot guarantee confidentiality to pupils giving evidence.

12. Whistleblowing Policy

Working closely with children is fundamental to teaching in schools. Where such interaction with children exists, so also does the opportunity to abuse them. It is regrettably the case that, in rare instances, teachers and other staff have been found to be responsible for child abuse. Given their daily contact with pupils in a variety of situations, staff are also vulnerable to allegations of abuse, whether deliberately or innocently false, malicious or misplaced. However, staff should avoid making their own judgements of whether an allegation is false or otherwise.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the School's practices and policies do not put children at risk, there may exist matters that have been overlooked, or new situations which have developed, that need challenging on child protection grounds.

No one should hesitate to take action to report concerns because of fear of possible repercussions. Any adult, who makes in good faith a report to the Headmaster, the police, or the Social Services of any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other significant harm, can expect immunity from retribution or disciplinary action.

13. Protocol for Inter-agency

The Headmaster is the designated Child Protection Officer and works closely with the State Wide Central Register (SCR). In compliance with New York State Law, ALL employees of the school are required to notify the SCR within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse or neglect. Employees are also required to share this information with the Child Protection Officer.

Concerns can be direct to the SCR on the following number: 1-800-342-3720.



14. Review

Any deficiencies or weaknesses found in the child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay, and the governing body will undertake an annual review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Approved by SLT: October 2011

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