



**BRITISH SCHOOL  
OF GENEVA**

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Revised: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 2023

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Approved by S. Thompson, School Principal

## INTRODUCTION

**Safeguarding is EVERYTHING we do in school to keep children safe, healthy, happy and therefore learning.**

The British School of Geneva recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children and that it is part of a wider safeguarding system. Our policy applies to all staff, the Board of Directors and volunteers working in the school. It also applies to all students at the school. Furthermore, BSG recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that the interest of the child is paramount.

At BSG, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all our employees and volunteers and any contractors / consultants and partner agency staff in our schools to share this commitment. In line with this, we expect them to recognise where a student is at risk of, or is actually being harmed, and to do all they can to reduce further risk or harm.

- At BSG, we adhere to the following basic child protection and safeguarding principles:
- A child's welfare is paramount, and each student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded irrespective of race, religion, ability, gender, or culture.
- All students need to be safe and feel safe in school.
- Every student is entitled to a rich and broad curriculum that helps to equip them to keep themselves safe.
- Every adult in school must have a demonstrable commitment to protecting the students with/for whom we work.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of students.
- Our guiding principle throughout is 'the best interests of the students'.
- All students have the same equal rights to protection, but we recognise that we need to do more for some because of their special educational needs, disability, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

## Policy Aims and Objectives

- Outline the systems and processes we all take to ensure that students remain safe at school.
- Raise awareness to all employees of safeguarding/child protection issues and define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Identify students who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.
- Ensure effective communication between all employees on child protection/safeguarding issues.
- Set effective procedures for employees/volunteers or third-party individuals who encounter any issues in relation to child protection/safeguarding to follow.
- Be clear with all parties, including students and their parents/carers, regarding our approach to safeguarding and child protection, through the provision of clear and well communicated policies.
- Provide a safe and happy environment to enable students to thrive and learn.

## Definitions

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the processes of protecting students from harm, preventing the impairment of their health and development, ensuring that we seek to improve the general health and well-being of all students in our care and enabling every student to have the optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

### Child Protection

Child Protection is the core element of safeguarding and is defined as the responsibility to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer from harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

### Note:

If the preventative work around safeguarding issues is not appropriate or extensive enough, students identified as being a concern may move to being identified as being at risk of significant harm. Although

other factors outside of the schools' control may also influence this, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that at BSG we take whatever measures are possible to avoid this from happening.

## Principles

This policy sets out our principles and expectations, as well as the procedures and processes, which must be adopted by all our schools and across our group as a whole. The policy also describes the steps that must be taken in meeting our commitment to safeguarding students, at both school, regional and group level.

Given our international context, we recognise and accept our responsibility to safeguard all students under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). We recognise our obligation to protect our students from harm and in particular, the obligation on us and our regions and schools under the following Articles of the UN convention:

- Article 3: which states that the best interests of children must be the primary concern in decision making about them.
  - Article 13: which states that children have the right to get and share information as long as it is not damaging to them or another child.
  - Article 14: which states that children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion.
  - Article 19: which states children have the right to be protected from hurt and mistreatment, physically and mentally.
  - Article 34: which states that Governments should protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.
  - Article 35: which states that Governments should take all measures to ensure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked.
  - Article 36: which states that children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.
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- Article 37: which states that no one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way.

All member states of the UN have signed up to the 1989 convention (with the exception of the United States of America) and all the UN articles can be found at the following link:

<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

## Responsibilities

### Principals / Heads of School and Senior Leadership Teams in Schools

#### The Principal / Heads of School and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that the policy is implemented across their school and followed by all employees and volunteers.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the culture of the school facilitates concerns being raised and handled sensitively.
- Ensure that safeguarding is addressed through the curriculum ensuring that children throughout the school are taught about keeping themselves safe, including online safety.
- Ensure the school site is secure.
- Only deploy employees who will have unsupervised contact with children, where safe recruitment procedures have been followed.
- Maintain a record of all training undertaken by employees in relation to safeguarding and child protection. This training record should be made available for inspection during any audit and should reflect the timescales for renewal identified in this policy.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead at BSG

- Play a key role in ensuring that the school takes action to support any student who may be at risk.
- With the Principal, make sure that all employees, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- Have appropriate training in addition to the basic training that all other employees receive. This includes attending ISP Designated Safeguarding Lead training at least every two years and actively participating in their DSL Regional Networking meetings to ensure they stay updated on safeguarding issues.
- Collate and keep accurate and confidential records of any concerns about children, this should include ensuring robust action plans are implemented at the earliest opportunity which are captured in writing and are reviewed regularly.
- Have a clear understanding of the local expectations around safeguarding, who to contact, what agencies exist and how to contact them.
- Ensure that the entire school community knows who the DSL/ DSL Team is in their setting.
- Be familiar with local regulations, procedures and agencies who can offer support for safeguarding matters.

- All employees have the responsibility to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility is to make decisions about what to do next and then to take appropriate action.

## All employees

- Ensure they are familiar with and follow the policy and all other safeguarding related documents e.g., Codes of Conduct, guidance for safe working practice.
- Be subject to safer recruitment processes and checks prior to starting at the school (unless an action plan/risk assessment is in place to ensure the employee is supervised until all checks are completed, this **must** be authorised by the Group Health and Safety Director before employment begins).
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- Listen to and take seriously the views and concerns of children, knowing what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
- Know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) and children's social care in their area. Employees should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- Be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Record any concerns and report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the school's concern form.
- Be aware of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in the school they are working in and how they can be contacted.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this document when/if concerned about any child.
- Support students, employees or other adults who have concerns, or who are the subject of concerns, to act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation.
- Undertake appropriate child protection/safeguarding and safe recruitment training (and refresher training as required by ISP).
- All employees and volunteers need to recognise that if their behaviour inside or outside the workplace breaches the BSG code of conduct, this may be considered a disciplinary or even criminal matter.

All employees who have occasional or supervised contact with children (including employees from partner and contracted organisations) will:

- Undergo a safeguarding briefing/induction in relation to their role, understand what is required of them if they have concerns and to whom they should report.
- Provide written confirmation to demonstrate that where appropriate, all partner agency

staff/contractors have been safely recruited with appropriate checks undertaken and that a safeguarding briefing has been provided to these employees, (appropriate to the role and contact they will have with children), before they commence their role in any ISP school. Where these employees or volunteers are constantly supervised, the recruitment checks may not need to be as rigorous, but it is for the Principal/ Designated Safeguarding Lead to assess this risk, not individual employees or partner organisations themselves.

- Where partners/contractors do not have their own safeguarding or child protection policy, the BSG application notes will be used, and partners/contractors asked to read and follow this. These requirements will be part of any contractual arrangement.
- Follow the guidance laid down in this document at all times.
- Be provided with guidance on appropriate safe working practice.

### **Non-teaching staff**

includes the cleaning staff, the bus driver, the IT staff, the administration staff and extra curriculum teachers. They should all receive Safeguarding training every year. They have the opportunity to observe children in different settings such as the canteen, the school bus, the medical room. They might overhear a conversation, observe changes in behaviour, notice signs of abuse or a more frequent use of the medical room.

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfill this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt actions.

This policy is revised annually or more often if there are changes in guidance or legislation. In September 2022, legislation and guidance used to inform is in line with the followings:

#### **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1080047/KCSIE\\_2022\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080047/KCSIE_2022_revised.pdf)

#### **Other documents used**

##### **For Canton of Geneva:**

<https://www.ge.ch/signaler-mineur-danger/notion-mineur-danger-son-developpement>

<https://www.ge.ch/document/appreciation-faits-enfant-danger-son-developpement/telecharger>

**For France voisine:**

<https://www.ain.fr/solutions/reperer-signaler-situations-enfants-en-difficulte/>

<https://www.hautesavoie.fr/informations-services/enfance-famille/protection-de-lenfance>

All staff receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection every year. All staff are issued with guidelines and the names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads. All staff read and understand the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy annually. This is completed on a signed piece of headed paper and filed in the Head of Pastoral Care's Office.

The latest version of the "Keeping Children safe in Education" is sent to all staff at the beginning of the school year.

**At BSG, the Child Protection Team comprises**



**Mr S Thompson**  
Principal



**Ms M Csoma**  
Head of Pastoral Care  
Designated Safeguarding Lead



**Ms L Dean**  
Special Education  
Need Coordinator.



**Ms V Hogan**  
Head of Primary  
Section



**Ms M Mantani**  
Head of Admissions



**Ms S Hutcheson**  
Head of Key Stage 3



**Ms A Parker**  
Head of Key Stage 4



**Mr D Feeney**  
Head of Key Stage 5

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads**

## Forms of abuse

There are a significant number of ways that students may be exposed to risk and danger. All require a response. Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. This can manifest itself as direct harm to a child, or by a failure to take action to protect a child who is at risk of, or already suffering harm.

The more commonly referred to types of abuse are:

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home

**Emotional abuse:** is 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. 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. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation (e.g. FGM)
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling

- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

**Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assaults by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not perpetrated solely by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.’ (Part One: Safeguarding Information for all staff September 2020 – page 9)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate or harmful sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

**Neglect** is a persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger/lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing/begging

**Child involvement in interparental conflict (ICP)** can increase children's risk for externalizing and internalizing problems through a variety of processes. Children's emotional, behavioral, social, academic outcomes, and future interpersonal relationships are negatively affected by conflict between parents/carers.

**A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.**

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if they have concerns about a child, or feels unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, they should speak to the DSL or the Deputy DSLs.

### **Children missing education**

is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Following the above procedures is a vital part of all staff's safeguarding role.

The Safety of our pupils is our paramount concern and our staff understands the responsibility for helping to keep students safe at all times.

Our staff have a responsibility to identify children and take appropriate action for those who may be in need of extra help, or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm and children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected, the schools will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. The School recognises that any unexplained absence of a child may be a cause for concern:

- A member of staff who notices a student is missing or sees them in a place where they should not be has a duty to inform the DSL without delay.
- Any unexplained absences will be investigated.
- Pupils who remain on a school roll but are absent for periods of time are not necessarily missing education, but schools should monitor attendance and address it when it is poor.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities**

All employees should recognise that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can mean additional safeguarding challenges. Depending on the nature of a child's special need or disability, additional barriers can exist which make it more difficult to identify and recognise signs of abuse. For example, it is easy to assume that a child's mood, behaviour, or any injury relates to their disability rather than the fact they may be suffering abuse. It should also be recognised that children with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted on by behaviours such as bullying but they may not show any outward signs. Communication difficulties can make it very difficult for a child to indicate what's happening and, therefore, may make it very difficult to overcome any such barrier.

Employees should be extra vigilant and report all concerns, avoiding making assumptions about the causes of any injury or behaviour.

## Specific Safeguarding Issues

There are specific safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm (listed below), all areas will be covered in ISP initial training courses and must be included in annual refresher training or during a safeguarding training programme delivered throughout the school year. This helps to ensure all employees are aware of the signs and indicators of these specific issues to enable early intervention support to be put in place within schools or referrals made to specialist outside agencies.

### *Peer on Peer abuse*

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Where an allegation is made that one child may have abused another, this will always be taken seriously and dealt with as a safeguarding matter. This type of peer-on-peer behaviour will not be tolerated. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Peer on Peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment;
- non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and/or videos (sexting);
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.

### **Anti-Bullying**

Bullying is a safeguarding matter and if left unresolved can become a more serious child protection issue. Employees at every level will take seriously any concerns raised in relation to the bullying of any student. Action will always be taken to investigate the concerns and to prevent repeat incidents or behaviours. Bullying may involve either face-to-face or the misuse of social media or technology. Each school should have its own policy and approach to restorative practices and all our schools will demonstrate a commitment to help resolve specific issues. ISP has a separate Anti-Bullying Policy Statement which must be referred to and fully referenced in relation to the bullying of any student. A

separate Policy is available on Google Drive.

## Sexual violence and sexual harassment

This can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. All employees must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Any report of peer-on-peer abuse should be taken seriously; it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

All employees should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

## Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked, or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages.

Sexting may also be referred to by students as trading nudes, dirties or pic for pic.

There are many reasons why a student may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video, or message to someone else:

They may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent or has groomed the child to gain their trust.

- Joining in because they think that 'everyone is doing it'.
- Boosting their self-esteem.

- Flirting with others and testing their sexual identity.
- Exploring their sexual feelings.
- To get attention and connect with new people on social media.

Students often do not realize that in creating and sending these images they are potentially committing a criminal act. Ideally, we would not want to deal with these issues as criminal acts. Learning and support can be a more beneficial way of tackling sexting. Employees must report any incident of sexting to the DSL on the school concern form.

## Mental Health

We are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. School employees, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that employees are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

If an employee has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by capturing the concern on the school's concern form and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

## Self-Harm

Self-harm can take a number of physical and/or emotional forms. There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. Once they start, it can become a compulsion. This is why it is so important for schools to spot it as soon as possible and do everything possible to help. Self-harm is not usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it 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.

The exact reasons why children and young people decide to hurt themselves are not always easy to work out. In fact, they might not even know exactly why they do it, but there are links between depression and self-harm. Quite often a child or young person who is self-harming is being bullied, under too much pressure, being emotionally abused, grieving, or having relationship problems with family or friends. The feelings that these issues bring up can include low self-esteem, low confidence, loneliness, sadness, anger, numbness, and lack of control in their lives. Young people will sometimes go to great lengths to cover self-harm scars or injuries and/or they will explain any indications of self-harm as accidents.

There are some common themes that may help employees identify concerns including:

- Physical indicators such as cuts, bruises, burns, bald patches (where hair has been pulled out).

- Emotional indicators such as depression, sudden weight loss, drinking or drug-taking, or unusual eating habits and isolation or withdrawal.

If an employee suspects that a student is self-harming this must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider the next steps. It is likely that this will require discussion with the student involved and their Parents/Carer's to agree a course of action or referral to an organisation that may be able to support the student.

### **Radicalisation and Extremism**

Children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). As with other safeguarding risks, employees should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

BSG 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 leads to violence and harm of others, goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion. Any freedom of speech which promotes violence against anyone or anything else will not be tolerated.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with through the procedures set out in this document i.e., concerns and signs of FGM must be reported to the DSL. FGM is potentially damaging to children both emotionally and in terms of health issues and is in breach of a number of articles under the UN convention on the rights of the child. It is illegal in 26 countries across Africa and the Middle East, as well as in 33 other countries including the United States of America and the UK.

We recognise that this is cultural practice in some countries and not always seen as abusive. While not condoning the practice, we need to be aware of the sensitivities surrounding it and always act in the student's best interests.

### **Forced marriages (FM)**

A Forced marriage (FM) is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g., threats, physical violence, or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g., if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

In 2013, the first United Nations Human Rights Council also adopted a resolution against child and forced marriages. This resolution recognises child, early, and forced marriage as involving violations of human rights which "prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and has

adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education.” As with FGM and some other cultural practices, we need to be aware of the cultural sensitivities but always act in the students’ best interests. However, the school procedures must be followed in the same way as for any other safeguarding or child protection matter.

### **Children missing from education**

All employees should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Employees should be aware of their school’s attendance policy and unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer on peer abuse is sometimes referred to as ‘teenage relationship abuse’.

### **Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

### **Fabricated and Induced illness**

In fabricated illness the perpetrator (usually a parent or carer) does not directly harm the child but reports to doctors a clinical story which is eventually established to be fabricated. Whereas with induced illness the perpetrator inflicts direct (hands on) harm to the child. This can range from trivial injuries such as pricking the child to add blood to urine, through to suffocation. All schools must have a robust attendance policy to aid the monitoring of child illnesses. When a parent reports that a child has an illness which requires a health plan the school must work in collaboration with the medical practitioner treating the child.

Note:

*The above is not an exhaustive list of all the potential forms of abuse which employees may have to deal*

*with on occasions. For information, please see “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2021. This is a UK publication, but the types of abuse discussed are valid and can apply to any country around the world. All employees are required to read and acknowledge receipt of Part 1 of the document.*

## IDENTIFYING ABUSE

Teachers and non-teaching staff are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes and these may be identified with some sensitive questioning.

Victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties but the signs described above can do no more than give cause for concern - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred.

Members of staff concerned that such abuse has occurred must report this immediately to **the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team and fill in a Concern form.**

Where a child approaches a member of staff to confide in them any information likely to lead to suspicion of child abuse, the member of staff must recognise that, in order to protect the child, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as we have to ensure that appropriate action is taken to act in the child's best interests.

**No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.**

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

**If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, staff must remember:**

- That the priority is to protect the child.
- That staff and student reporting will be protected against retribution.
- To treat the manner seriously – always stop and listen straight away.
- To receive the child's story and remain calm and reassuring. Listen but do not judge – children who have suffered abuse may have low self-esteem and may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion.
- To react to what the child tells them with belief and tell the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- To indicate to the child what action they will take and make it clear that they will have to inform others (no secrets). Only inform those with the need to know.
- To keep an accurate record of what they have become aware of and of what they have done.

To fill in a Concern form every time the child disclose an information or staff notice anything concerning.

**Staff must not:**

- Contact the parents.
- Interrogate the child if that child has disclosed information or ask leading questions such as 'did he or she do X to you? Keep your questions open: 'is there anything else you want to tell me?

- Speak to anyone about whom allegations are made (including colleagues).
- Promise to keep secrets / confidentiality.
- Ask a child out right if they or others have suffered abuse.

**If a member of staff has concerns about a child or if a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff,** the member of staff must act immediately. They should not investigate - this is a matter for the child protection agencies or the police - but should report these concerns immediately to the DSL (or, in her absence, the Principal). This should not wait until a convenient time, or the end of a working day for example. The member of staff should discuss the matter with the DSL (or the Principal) and make full notes.

The DSL will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made. The DSL, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to child protection agencies. Advice may be sought from a variety of Swiss and French organisations. No decision to refer a case to child protection agencies will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice.

**If there are concerns that the child may be at risk or if a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DSL will inform either the ‘**Service de Protection des Mineurs**’ (Switzerland) <https://www.ge.ch/signaler-mineur-danger/comment-proceder-signalement> or ‘**allo enfance en danger – phone number 119**’ (France) <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F781>.

**If allegations about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff,** the Principal (or the DSL, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the DSL or the Principal). The Board of Directors will be informed immediately. Where the matter is referred to child protection agencies or the police, the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with students, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by child protection agencies or the police. Suspension in a case of this kind is a procedural step only and must be viewed as a neutral action that does not presuppose guilt or innocence.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Board of Directors will be informed and will immediately take appropriate advice and action.

**If allegations about possible child abuse is made against students,** the DSL should be informed immediately. The DSL will inform the Principal. The above procedures will apply. In addition, the immediate safety of the victim will be considered and a safe place provided. Both sets of parents will be informed. Support will be offered to both individuals. Following investigation, an appropriate way forward will be deduced in line with the school policy on Behaviour.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Further information can be found in the school anti-bullying policy.

## RECORDS

All staff must record accurately information that may be required in respect of child protection. If a child discloses possible abuse, write brief notes using the Record of Concern form, **if you can**, of what they are telling you while they are speaking and keep original notes, however rough they are.

It is important that what you record is as factually accurate as possible and reports faithfully what the student discloses. The student's own words must be recorded, not your version of them. Do not infer meaning from what the student said. All notes must be signed, dated and timed. You may describe his/her body language.

**If you cannot write notes while the student is speaking**, record the precise information **as soon as possible**, with date, event, actions taken, and sign and date the record.

All staff records must be passed to the DSL for action and storage. Records will be kept securely in the DSL's office in a locked cupboard. In cases of alleged child abuse which come to court, child protection records may be required by the court.

Staff must use the Record of Concern Form to report anything they consider unsafe including health and safety issues with the school site/ building.

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING OTHER SIGNIFICANT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

**Any** child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage

- is a privately fostered child, and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.
- Disclosure of wanting to self-harm or actual self-harm.
- Disclosure of suicidal feelings or actual plans of attempting suicide or if *you are concerned that the student is at risk* even if he has not said so.
- Disclosure of wanting to harm a third person.
- Disclosure of wanting to run away.

**If a member of staff is concerned that a student is in immediate danger**, the member of staff must act immediately. They should not investigate but should report their concerns immediately to the DSL (or, in her absence, the Principal). The student should be under adult supervision either in class or in the office. This should not wait until a convenient time, or the end of a working day, for example. This can be done in person or by asking the office to locate the DSL on school premises.

**If the conversation happens at the end of the day and you are concerned about the safety of the student, you MUST ask the student to accompany you to the office.** Office staff will keep the student under supervision and will locate the DSL or, in her absence, the Principal.

## The role of Peer-Mentors and Student Leaders

Peer-mentors need to be aware of the need to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the DSL. Children often tell other young people, rather than staff or adults, about abuse. All peer-mentors and student leaders are briefed on the school Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Our Safer Recruitment policy set out in a separate policy, in accordance with the ISP guidelines. A separate Policy is available on Google Drive.

## THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The staff of BSG recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. 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 or they may be withdrawn. BSG will endeavor to support the students who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such students in accordance with their agreed protection plan.

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our students by providing students with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Support for all students in the school in developing skills in self-protection and

developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly PSHE and Study skills, which equips children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and which they should turn to for help if the need arises.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment where they are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, giving students a sense of being valued
- Ensuring that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Liaising with other agencies that support the student such as social services, child protection agencies, educational psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and the Head of Pastoral.

## **SAFE TOUCH POLICY**

Our Safe touch policy set out in a separate policy, in accordance with ISP guidelines.

## **E-SAFETY AND ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

Sensitive information should not be shared by email and Child Protection issues should not be reported by email. Complex issues should be discussed in the Pastoral Care office. The full name of the students should not appear in any email. The subject line should contain only the initials and the year group. The ENGAGE platform should be used to communicate any new or ongoing classroom or playground situations & observations.

The School's online policy is clearly set out and is informed by DfE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies, It also addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies. A separate

## **INTIMATE CARE**

The management of all students with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. Students who require intimate care will be treated with respect at all times; their welfare and dignity is of paramount importance and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

The school's Code of Conduct for Members of Staff in their Behaviour towards Students should be known to all staff – permanent and non-permanent and volunteers and reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

A separate Policy is available.

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES TO BE USED BY PARENTS

Parents who have a concern about their child's or another child's safety at school may use the following procedure to report their concern: In the event of a parent reporting a concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Principal will contact the complainant within one week of the complaint being made to report on the progress of the investigation.

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

- If you have something important to talk to a member of staff about.
- If you are worried about something that is happening to you, or to someone you know.
- If you need help, or if you need to know how to get help the staff are here to listen and to help - they will try to do what they can.
- If you are worried about telling things in confidence.
  - o tell the staff - they will understand. If they are concerned about your safety, they may need to share this with others, but they will always tell you first.
- If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff, you can telephone **LAVI - Centre d'aide aux victimes d'agressions** (+41 22 320 01 02). They will help you work out what to do next.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ms M Csoma, the Head of Pastoral Care.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are , Ms V Hogan, Ms A Parker, Mrs S Hutcheson, and Mr Feeney.

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES TO BE USED BY BSG STAFF

Any allegation by a child that they are suffering or have suffered abuse will be treated seriously and will immediately trigger the reporting procedures. Where teachers see signs that cause them concern, they must:

1. Seek some discreet preliminary clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Non-teaching staff must immediately bring their concern to their line-manager or to the designated/deputy designated safeguarding lead.
2. Be aware that the way they ask questions or talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings.

Staff **must** remember:

- To treat the matter seriously – always stop and listen straight away.
- To receive the child's story and remain calm and reassuring. Listen but do not judge – children who have suffered abuse may have low self-esteem and may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion.

- To listen carefully and assure the child that he/she is believed
- To listen and not interrupt if the child is recalling events freely
- To limit any questioning bearing in mind the must not points below.
- To reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- To indicate to the child what action they will take and make it clear that they will have to inform others (no secrets). Only inform those with the need to know.
- To inform the DSL recording time, date, place, people present, what was said and any signs of physical injury.
- To keep an accurate record of what they have become aware of and of what they have done and fill in the Record of Concern form
- That the notes taken may need to be used in subsequent court proceedings

**Staff must not:**

- Contact the parents
- Interrogate the child if that child has disclosed information
- Ask leading questions such as ‘did he or she do X to you?’ or ask the child questions which encourage the child to change their version of events or impose the adult’s own assumptions. Keep your questions open: ‘is there anything else you want to tell me?’
- Under any circumstances remove a child’s clothing
- Promise to keep secrets / confidentiality
- Speak to anyone about whom allegations are made (including colleagues)
- Ask a child outright if they or others have suffered abuse.

**The safety of the child is the first priority.**

3. Refer the matter to a Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Ms M Csoma** or the Deputy DSLs, **Ms V Hogan, Ms A Parker, Mrs S Hutcheson and Mr D Feeney**. The DSL or Deputy DSLs will then inform the Principal. In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made by a student or third party that abuse has taken place, or where serious concerns exist about a child’s welfare, the DSL will inform either the ‘**Service de Protection des Mineurs**’ (Switzerland) [https://www.ge.ch/signaler-mineur-danger/comment\\_proceder-signalement](https://www.ge.ch/signaler-mineur-danger/comment_proceder-signalement) or ‘**allo enfance en danger – phone number 119**’ (France) <https://www.service public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F781>.

While discreet preliminary clarification may be sought in order to confirm or allay concerns, it is not the responsibility of teachers or the school to carry out investigations into cases of suspected abuse or to make extensive enquiries of members of the child’s family or other carers.

**Support for the member of staff**

Should the member of staff feel they need support from the DSL following a disclosure, this should be made available.

