



SAFE Community Interest Company
Safer Activities For Everyone CIC

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

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Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy (Full Model)

Organisation: International House Belfast

Policy Statement

We recognise that the welfare of all children is paramount and that *all* children and young people; regardless of ability or culture, have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care when they are in our charge and we will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities.

Policy Aim

As members of SAFE, we aim at all times to attain the SAFE standards in all our activities with children, young people, their families and/or carers. We will achieve this by adhering strictly to this policy and the guidance and risk assessments

Child Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

The responsibility of managing the safeguarding of children can be both demanding and challenging, and therefore must be appointed at managerial level to personnel who are available when we are operational.

Our lead for child safeguarding is:

Duanes Santos, Director

International House Belfast, 109-111 University Street Belfast, BT7 1HP

duanes@ihbelfast.com

Phone: 02890 330700

Our deputy is:

Carole Kane, Operations Manager

International House Belfast, 109-111 University Street Belfast, BT7 1HP

carole@ihbelfast.com

Phone: 02890 330700

Their role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding children policy is fully implemented and that we attain SAFE standards. These details will be made available to all adults, children and parents/carers by training, information in staff areas and enrolment information. This



includes ensuring they and all staff receive child protection training as appropriate. The deputy should be available to support or cover for the nominated lead. S/he will also handle any complaints or allegations against the nominated lead if appropriate.

Why do we need a Safeguarding Children Policy?

The five main outcomes for children as detailed in “Every Child Matters” agenda 2003 and subsequent Children Act 2004 are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- economic well-being

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, families, parents and carers have responsibilities (see Appendix for References). It is important to remember that children and young people can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

- **All organisations should:**
- **have senior managers committed to safeguarding**
- **be clear about people’s responsibilities and accountability**
- **have a culture of listening to children**
- **safe recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers working with children & young people**
- **procedures for safeguarding children and young people**
- **procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about, staff & volunteers**
- **make sure staff have mandatory induction and further safeguarding training, supervision, reviews and support**
- **have agreements about working with other organisations and agencies**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

“Children are individuals whose rights, needs and welfare are paramount.”

Children Act 1989

The 2 key principals of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 are:



- **Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility; for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part and**
- **a child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based upon a clear understanding of the needs and views of children**

**“No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs”
Equality Act 2010**

All references and documents are available under “References” on
the homepage of www.safecic.co.uk



Recognising Abuse

Physical:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child 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 children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Sexual:

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 assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect:

Neglect is the 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 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.

Treating Children with Respect

We endeavour to treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of ability or culture. We ensure that everyone signs up to the SAFE Adult's and/or Young People's Codes of Conduct alongside any relevant governing body's guidance.

We also circulate and make available to everyone by training, information in staff areas and enrolment information our confidentiality statement, complaints procedures, allegations and "whistleblowing" statements and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Celebrating Children's Achievements

We positively encourage all children and young people to succeed and celebrate their achievements.

We are particularly sensitive to the needs of disabled children who may achieve in smaller steps than their peers but are equally entitled to celebration.

Rigorous Recruitment

We adhere to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) Key Standards for Recruitment, Ofsted, CQC and SAFE guidelines for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid by obtaining full personal details and application forms (not CVs) with particular relevance to previous work with children and young people.

We always take up two written references and insist that any appointment, where staff has direct and/or unsupervised access to children and young people, will only be confirmed subject to a satisfactory DBS check at the appropriate level.



At interview we have sound procedures and recording to ensure we are satisfied and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable.

At least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training

Induction & Training

In line with SAFE recommendations we have a clear induction and training strategy detailing clear job descriptions and responsibilities and all relevant procedures as detailed under **“Treating Children with Respect”**. All new staff sign to record they have received and understand the “Good Practice ” leaflet and those with direct contact with children and young people, or managers, will attend SAFE child protection training within 3 months of appointment. We also agree a probationary period of 6 months with clear goals and then provide supervision/mentoring/appraisals at regular intervals of 12 months.

Confidentiality

We have a clear policy in line with SAFE recommendations about confidentiality and information sharing and these details will be made available to all adults, children, parents and carers by training, information in staff areas and enrolment information.

We fully endorse the principal that the welfare of children and young people over ride any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis. Under “whistleblowing” anyone in our organisation may refer direct to either children’s social care services or the police (CQC and Ofsted as relevant) if they are concerned that a child is at risk of harm and this policy is not being adhered to. All media enquiries will be handled by Duanes Santos.

Handling Disclosures

A disclosure may be made verbally or through play or through the behaviour by a child, young person or an adult and it is important for everyone to remember the following:

If you are concerned about a child it is important that this information is communicated to the lead and/ or deputy for child safeguarding.

You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Your own observations and concerns;
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about a child;
- The child tells you;
- The abuser tells you.



Also remember that you may not always be working directly with the child but become concerned because of difficulties experienced by the adults e.g.

- Domestic violence incidents
- Mental health issues
- Substance and alcohol abuse Incidents

Other concerns may be:

- Children living away from home or gone missing
- Peer abuse including bullying
- Race and racism
- Violent extremism
- Sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Concealed pregnancy
- Child trafficking
- eSafety

Remember:

- Do not delay.
- Do not investigate.
- Seek advice from the child protection lead or deputy.
- Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told.



Responding to Concerns

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our organisation understand and know how to share any concerns immediately with the child protection lead and deputy. We do this by by training, information in staff areas and enrolment information. Everyone including both the lead and deputy for child safeguarding will deal with concerns using the following:

Step 1

If you are worried a child has been abused because:

- You have seen something
- A child says they have been abused
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned
- There has been an allegation against a member of staff
- There has been an anonymous allegation
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing a child
- An adult has disclosed they were abused as a child

Important: Any consultation should not delay a referral. In an emergency dial 999

**Consult
Monitor & Record
(Sign/date/time)**

Step 2 (within 24 hrs)

Your organisation should have a policy for child protection. Talk to the Lead Person for Child Protection or their Deputy.

Step 3

S/he (or anyone else if not available) should refer the concern to Children's Social Care Services and/or the police (in an emergency) and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours**.

*** In cases of allegations against a person with a "duty of care", the LADO will coordinate the next procedural steps.*

Handling Allegations / Dealing with Complaints / Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

We have clear policies in line with SAFE recommendations about handling allegations, dealing with complaints and our own disciplinary and grievance procedures and these details will be made available to all adults, children, parents and carers as necessary by training, information in staff areas and enrolment information.

We are mindful that the three procedures may confuse the next appropriate steps to take. We are clear that, in any case where a complaint has been made with regards to any inappropriate or poor practice, we will discuss the situation with children's social care services before making an open decision about the best way forward.



It is the responsibility of the child protection lead and/or deputy to ensure that these procedures are rigorously adhered to. In the case that the child protection lead is implicated, the deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, it is the duty of the person concerned to contact children's social care services direct.

Children's social care services will manage any investigations, overseen by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) procedures. These are available on the SCB website.

With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, we are very clear that we will take no steps until we have fully discussed and agreed a strategy with the Local Authority Designated Officer, children's social care services and/or the police. Any investigation will over ride the need to implement any such procedures. Our management are responsible for making referrals to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), and the relevant professional bodies of an individual who does or may pose a danger to children and young people. Other organisations will liaise with their LADO and local agencies if such a referral needs to be made.

Record Keeping

All records will be securely kept in safe in accounts office. Only the child safeguarding lead and/or deputy will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary.

Normally these records will be passed to children's social care services as soon as possible. All records will be handwritten (and if recorded electronically, kept in a secure area) by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets and will be factual, non-judgmental. All such records will have a front page listing the papers in chronological order.

It is helpful to record any known details of the child/children or young people involved e.g., name, address, date of birth etc. All records should be factual. It is equally important to record the reasons for making the decision not to refer to children's social care services as when the decision is taken to refer. Always sign, clearly detail name and job role of the person making the record. Date and time these records.

Providers of child care, educational, health or other formal services will use the Common Assessment Framework (now under review) referral forms

SAFE Recommendations

In order to attain and retain our SAFE award everybody needs to be vigilant in adhering to this policy and also assessing the risks of their own work and activities. These risk assessments will be carried out annually by the lead and/or deputy for child safeguarding, however it is the responsibility of everyone to draw attention to practices and procedures that they are unhappy or uncomfortable with.



It is only through adopting SAFE policies and practices that we can all be confident we have done everything we can to safeguard the children and young people in our care. (For large organisations audits may optionally be carried out by the SAFE team every three years for each site.)

Policy Date

This policy was agreed and disseminated on April 2022 and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational changes.

Policy Review Date: March 2025

Signed:

Lead for child safeguarding: Duanes Santos

Deputy for child safeguarding: Carole Kane

Chair/Senior Manager/Director: Duanes Santos

Date: March 2025

A separate record for staff signatures should be maintained to evidence they have seen and understand this policy

References

Note, all references can be found in the reference section at www.safecic.co.uk



Appendix 1

CARE OF UNDER 18'S AT THE ADULT SCHOOL

IH Belfast accepts students aged 16-17 on adult courses. Any students under 18 will regularly mix with students aged 18 or over in the classroom and during social activities and excursions.

All students at IH Belfast receive high-quality tuition in the classroom and a high level of support from our staff throughout their experience and, wherever possible, an additional level of care is provided to students under the age of 18.

Enrolling an under-18 student

As under-18s are not yet considered adults by UK law, IH Belfast must receive a completed and signed Under 18 Consent Form for all under 18 year olds enrolling on an IH Belfast course.

The Under 18 Consent Form will be sent at the time we confirm the booking of the course.

This form is mandatory and must be completed, signed and dated by a parent / guardian and returned to IH Belfast prior to or at the start of the student's course.

Transfer service for under-18 students

IH Belfast arranges arrival and departure transfers on request. We strongly recommend that all under 18s book the IH Belfast transfer service.

An IH Belfast representative will meet the student at the arrival gate of the airport with an IH Belfast sign. The contact details of this person will be sent before arrival so that the student knows who to expect.

Accommodation for students under 18

Homestay Accommodation

We have paid special attention to our homestay accommodation service, so families and homes that we have inspected and selected, guarantee students a comfortable and welcoming stay while they are in Belfast.

All homestay families used by IH Belfast for under 18s have undergone thorough checks to ensure their suitability. This includes a criminal record check ('Access NI').

IH Belfast does not place students who are under 18 with homestays where other students hosted by that host are over 18.



Independently arranged Accommodation

If a student under 18 years old is NOT staying in IH Belfast arranged accommodation, the contact details of where they are staying must be provided on the consent form.

Social programme and excursions

Students at IH Belfast are offered a very full and engaging weekly social programme. Some of these events are free and any fees for events and activities are always clearly stated. Please ensure the student has enough funds to cover activities they may wish to join. There is no additional level of care provided to under-18s on the social programme. IH Belfast is not responsible for the actions or safety of students while they are on an activity.

IH Belfast also arranges weekend excursions throughout Northern Ireland with a reputable travel company. Please note that there is no IH Belfast supervision provided on these excursions and IH Belfast is not responsible for the actions or safety of students while on these excursions.

Medical care

IH Belfast has First Aid qualified staff available on site, Monday to Friday 09:00-17:00.

IH Belfast can also help students arrange visits to a dentist or doctor if required.

IH Belfast can only seek medical treatment for a student under 18 if we have received a signed Under 18 Consent Form.

Spending money

We recommend that students bring a cash card or a credit card to the UK.

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted in shops and restaurants in the UK and you can obtain cash with these cards in most banks or at ATMs. Many outlets will require your PIN number and a signature is not sufficient.

Flights

Some airlines do not allow under-18s to travel without an adult. As airline policies regarding young travellers change frequently, all students must check the current guidelines before booking any flights.

It is recommended to book flights in good time to ensure that under-18s will not travel at unacceptable times, for example, very late at night, especially if they are not using IH Belfast transfer services. Additional fees apply for out-of-hours transportation.



Issues

As with all IH Belfast students, upon booking a course with us you will receive a booking confirmation. The booking confirmation has lots of useful information on studying and staying in Belfast. It includes an emergency out of hours number in case you would like to speak to an IH Belfast representative out of hours. During office hours you are welcome to speak to any member of staff you are comfortable speaking with. We will endeavor to resolve your issue promptly and sensitively.

Appendix 2

Care of Junior students (under 18) attending a teenage summer camp with IH Belfast. Agreement between parents/guardians, students and staff.

This policy sets out rules for Junior (under 18) students attending a summer camp with IH Belfast and highlights the level of care which should be provided by IH staff at all times.

International House Belfast is committed to providing a secure and friendly environment where all members of the community, whatever their background or character, are protected from harm and respected by others. The quality of pastoral care influences the ethos and tone of our whole school. It is of crucial importance in creating an atmosphere in which young people feel secure, know that they are valued as individuals, and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development in a healthy and safe environment.

We aim to inform and reassure parents that their children are being educated in a safe and caring atmosphere. Our safeguarding policy ensures we have clear channels in place for the safeguarding of young people and that we have dedicated managerial staff to be contacted in the case of an emergency and anyone involved with the school is made aware of this policy, it is also available as a download at <http://ihbelfast.com/policy/>. However, all staff, teaching and nonteaching, have a responsibility for pastoral care. IH Belfast recognises that a student should be able to address any member of staff they feel comfortable with, with any concerns they may have. The management arrangements within the school enable and encourage all staff to contribute effectively to establishing and maintaining a climate which is characterised by good relationships and mutual respect. This is why we ask all our staff to take part in Safe CIC training, which covers all areas of child protection.

All staff and any other adults involved with International House Belfast accept and recognise their responsibilities:

- * to safeguard the welfare of children who join the School and any of its programmes;
- * to continually develop awareness of any issues which might harm these children;
- * not to make staff or any other adults involved with the School unnecessarily vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuse.

Our lead for safeguarding is:



International House Belfast Designated Person for Safeguarding

Duanes Santos, Director

International House Belfast

Telephone: 0044 (0) 2890 330700

Email: duanes@ihbelfast.com

Our deputy is:

International House Belfast Deputy Person for Safeguarding

Carole Kane, Operations Manager

International House Belfast

Telephone: 0044 (0) 2890 330700

Email: carole@ihbelfast.com

We will endeavour to safeguard children as follows:

- by adopting child protection guidelines and accepted procedures
- by providing children with expected codes of behaviour and ensuring they understand what those are, especially bullying.
- by sharing information about child protection and good practice
- by sharing information about any concerns.
- IH Belfast will ensure there is sufficient adult supervision for all scheduled activities (excluding classroom teaching)
- IH Belfast will ensure there is 1 adult to 12 group members for excursions where the element of risk to be encountered is similar to that normally encountered in daily life, e.g. excursions to sites of historic interest, local walks etc;
- Group leaders are responsible for their own group only and will not be counted in our supervision ratios.
- The ratio of 1-12 will be reviewed for each activity, taking into account the nature of the activity, age, gender and needs of the students and if there is increased risk than that encountered in daily life.
- Any activities where professional qualifications are required to lead them e.g. rock climbing, canoeing will be led only by professionally qualified instructors.
- The Group leader involved in an excursion's planning and organisation, and who is well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk.
- IH Belfast will ensure there is sufficient adult supervision to deal with an emergency.
- Providing information and guidance to participants is an important part of preparing for an excursion. Participants should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the



excursion will entail. Participants must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Participants should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

- The following information on matters that might affect the leader's (and participant's) health and safety should be given:
 - dates of the excursion;
 - times of departure and return
 - the location where the participants will be collected and returned
 - mode(s) and duration of travel
 - the size of the group and the level of supervision
 - name of leader, and other staff (if applicable)
 - clothing and equipment to be taken (if applicable)
 - details on the cost of the visit.
- Whatever the length and nature of the excursion, regular head counting of participants should take place, particularly where there are opportunities for participants to become separated. All supervisors should carry a list of all participants involved in the excursion at all times, preferably on their person
- The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell participants what to do if they become separated from the group.
- IH Belfast will ensure there is sufficient adult supervision in residential accommodation to deal with any emergency arising at all times teaching). IH Belfast will ensure there is 1 adult to 12 under 18s in residential accommodation. There will be a first aid kit/facilities and a First Aid trained member of staff available at all times.
- Under-18s will never be placed in accommodation with other student who are over 18.
- In residential accommodation male and female students will be separated by wing/floor.
- Supervising residential staff will always be of same sex as the under 18s they are supervising in their area.
- Group leaders are responsible for their own group only and will not be counted in our supervision ratios.
- We have paid special attention to our homestay accommodation service, so families and homes that we have inspected and selected guarantee students a comfortable and welcoming stay while they are in Belfast.



- All homestay families used by IH Belfast for under 18s have undergone thorough checks to ensure their suitability. This includes a criminal record check 'Access NI', a home interview and inspection along with a home visit every 2 years.
- Homestay providers will not host students under 16 with any students of 18 years or older.
- IH Belfast do not place any students of the same nationality or mother tongue with the same homestay provider, unless this has been requested directly from the parent/guardian.
- Junior students will not be left unsupervised at home.

As a result of the above, it is important that the following rules are followed by students:

- Students attending our July young learners' programmes must not go out unescorted, apart from their journey to/from the programme each day.
- Junior students should not go out unaccompanied in the evenings. A responsible adult should be always with the student. Under special circumstances junior students may request to be allowed out in the evenings and IH Belfast (or the group leader) will consider this on a case by case basis. For example, if there is an evening activity which a dedicated group leader will be attending, or if the parent of the student writes and gives formal permission for their son/daughter to go out unaccompanied, and if the homestay provider (if applicable) has also been made aware of this and on their side agrees with this. In the event of such an agreement taking place the student must return home by 9.30pm.
- Junior students should make sure they are contactable by their homestay provider and International House Belfast by providing a contact mobile phone number immediately upon arrival. This should be given to your group leader and your homestay provider. You should ensure that you program your group leaders emergency number and your homestay providers contact number into your mobile on the first day.

If staying in homestay accommodation, before leaving the home, a junior student should make sure that:

- the host knows what they will be doing (if they are doing something other than attending classes);
- the student knows the scheduled time for the main evening meal;
- the host knows what time they (the student) expects to be back;
- they have the correct contact details for the family (may differ from day to day);
- the host knows who they are going out with (only applicable If the student has been given consent to do so by their parent/guardian at home.) Students should not go out alone.
- If the student expects to be home later than scheduled, because of delays or changes of schedule, they should inform their host immediately by phone.
- If the student expects to be home earlier than scheduled, they should also contact their host to check whether somebody will be at the family home at the earlier time.
- Family meals form an important part of the junior student's homestay experience and the student should make every effort to take these meals with the family.
- A junior student is expected to abide by their homestay providers rules.



- Junior students should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the city and its transport system during the first few days of their stay. Students will receive help/guidance on this, from the school and your homestay provider when you arrive.
- Students must follow the instructions given by their teacher or social programme person during social programme activities. If students fail to follow the rules and instructions given by International House Belfast, the group leader and the parents may be informed. Students may be asked to leave the school if they repeatedly fail to follow the rules.

Abusive behaviour:

The following behaviour is not tolerated at International House Belfast:

- Bullying of any kind (physical or verbal)
- Racism (with respect to other races, nationalities, cultures and religions)
- Excessive and / or loud swearing
- Sexual harassment of any kind
- Aggressive behaviour towards staff, students or visitors (e.g. shouting at other students inappropriately, kicking furniture)
- Theft (stealing other people's property or International House Belfast property)
- Vandalism (e.g. deliberately breaking damaging school furniture / computers)
- Any illegal activity (illegal under UK Law)

If a student's behaviour becomes unacceptable (in International House Belfast's opinion), the student will be given one written warning (also sent to parents / guardians). If unacceptable behaviour occurs again, International House Belfast will order the student to leave the school immediately and with no refund of fees. Please note that the school may ask the student to leave immediately and with no written warning if the behaviour is very serious in the school's opinion. Parents must arrange for their child to return home as soon as possible, at the expense of the parents/guardians.

Students must follow UK Law, which includes the following:

Under 18s cannot buy alcohol.

Under 18s cannot buy cigarettes.

Under 18s cannot drink alcohol in pubs, bars and cafes.

In addition, the age of consent is 16 years old in the UK.

Appendix 3

GUIDANCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND STAFF WORKING TOGETHER AT IH BELFAST.

1. Introduction

The guidance in the document is designed to help safeguard young people and reduce the risk of teaching, activity or pastoral staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight, however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. It also gives explanations



for the guidelines, in order to help staff reflect on their roles and be able to respond effectively in situations not covered in the sections below.

The document is based on best practice guidelines for staff working in British primary and secondary state education. The original document is 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings', IRSC, February 2005.

2. Key Definitions

In this document, the words "children", "young people", "students" and "pupils" all refer to children under the age of 18 years.

A vulnerable adult is someone who may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation

The term "allegation" means any information that suggests an adult has caused or may cause hurt or harm to a child or young person.

The terms "senior staff" and "senior colleague" include academic directors, centre managers, the DOS or school directors.



3. Underpinning Principles

1. The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
2. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
3. Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
4. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.
5. Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed in accordance with the school policy for record-keeping. This policy will be explained in staff induction meetings.
6. Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
7. All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. This will be explained in staff induction meetings.
8. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

4. Duty of Care

Teachers and other staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is partially imposed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

5. Exercising Professional Judgement

Where no specific guidance exists staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

However, in the case of unusual situations such as accidents, threats from students or major misunderstandings with them, the staff should always write down what happened and then discuss it with a manager to ensure that the safest practices are employed and to reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.

6. Power and Positions of Trust

Staff are in a position of trust with young people and have a responsibility to ensure that they do not use their position for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should not use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students.

Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and report to senior staff and record any incident with this potential.



7. Confidentiality

In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations) and such information should be treated in a discreet and confidential manner.

If staff are in any doubt about whether to share or keep information confidential, they should seek advice from a senior member of staff.

When a member of staff may be expected to share confidential information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only on a need-to-know basis.

8. Propriety and Behaviour

Staff should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.

Therefore, staff should not, for example:

- make sexual remarks to a pupil (including by email, text messages, phone or letter);
- discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils;
- discuss a pupil's sexual relationships.

9. Dress and Appearance

When in contact with students, staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as offensive, revealing or provocative could leave themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

10. Gifts

Staff should not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give personal gifts to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a young person should be part of an agreed reward system and not based on favouritism.

11. Infatuations

It is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. All such situations should be responded to sensitively, to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Staff should also be aware that these circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and of allegations being made.

A member of staff who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with them or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.



12. Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact outside the classroom with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff should not give their personal details, such as home/mobile phone number, home or e-mail address, to pupils.

13. Physical Contact – General Principles

In general, it is advisable to avoid physical contact with students.

However, if contact becomes necessary, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued, so:

- contact should never be secretive;
- staff should never indulge in horseplay or tickling;
- staff should always be prepared to explain actions;
- staff must accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny.

It should be recognised that a number of children who have suffered neglect or abuse may be extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Staff should always record and report serious incidents of contact whether by staff member to student or vice versa.

14. Physical Contact - Sports and other activities which require physical contact

Some staff, for example, those who teach sports and games, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. If possible, staff should use alternatives to physical contact with students, e.g. by demonstrating an action using another member of staff.

15. Physical Contact - Showers and Changing

If staff members are required to supervise students changing or taking a shower (for example, to prevent bullying or to meet health and safety requirements) they should:

- avoid physical contact with students who are in a state of undress
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- where there are changing rooms, announce their intention of entering and avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it.

Adults should not change or shower in the same place as children, e.g. in the same changing rooms in a sports centre.



16. Physical Contact - Pupils in Distress

There may be rare occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. If at all possible, such contact should be given in the presence of another member of staff.

Staff should always tell a manager when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record situations which may give rise to concern.

17. Physical Contact - Care, Control and Physical Intervention

The circumstances in which staff can intervene with a pupil are covered by the 1996 Education Act. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or causing damage to property.

When physical intervention is necessary, staff should remember the health and safety of themselves and the rest of the students in the group.

The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence, so staff should:

- try to defuse situations before they escalate
- call or send a student for assistance when necessary
- use minimum force for the shortest period necessary
- adhere to the school's behaviour management policy

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, details of the incident and subsequent actions should be written down and reported to senior managers.

18. Behaviour Management

Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. In addition, the use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.

19. Sexual Contact with Young People

According to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Therefore any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person in their care is both inappropriate and illegal, regardless of whether or not the child or young person consents or whether they are aware of what is happening or not.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact, but also non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

While praise for effort and achievement is a normal part of staff-student relationships, staff should be aware of the possibility that conferring excessive special attention and favour upon a child could be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process. This is where an adult attempts to gain the trust of a child and manipulates that relationship so sexual abuse can take place.



20. One-to-One Situations

Staff working in one-to-one situations with children and young people (for example, while doing speaking exam practice) may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly.

Staff should:

- try to avoid one-to-one situations if possible;
- avoid meetings with pupils in secluded areas of school;
- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by;
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible, since they may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy;
- always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague;
- consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.

21. Transporting Children

In certain situations e.g. airport transfers, medical visits, staff may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. For example, they should ensure that the vehicle meets all legal requirements, is roadworthy and appropriately insured, that students are wearing seatbelts at all times and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

When transporting children, staff should try to avoid being alone with them for longer than necessary. They should also ensure that a senior member of staff is informed before *and after* children are transported on unscheduled journeys, e.g. when students cannot be collected by host families. When relevant, staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of students is their responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer.

23. First Aid and Administration of Medication

All staff should be aware of the identity of trained first aiders/appointed persons on school and residential sites. Staff should receive appropriate training before administering first aid or medication.

Pupils may need medication during school hours. In circumstances where children need medication regularly a health care plan should be drawn up by senior staff and parents to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff. With the permission of parents, the children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves.

If a member of staff is concerned or uncertain about the amount or type of medication being given to a pupil, this should be discussed with the appropriate senior colleague at the earliest opportunity. When administering first aid, wherever possible, staff should ensure that another adult is present, or aware of the action being taken. After administering first aid, the first aider should record the event in the accident book and inform senior staff, so that they can contact the group leader and if necessary, parents.



24. Intimate Care

Everyone has a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). It is envisaged that this will generally only apply to young children.

Students should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken. Staff should also explain to the child what is happening.

25. Curriculum

When selecting topics, teaching materials and activities, care should be taken to ensure that they are appropriate to the levels of maturity, personalities and cultures of the students in the class and that they cannot be misinterpreted. Care should be taken when discussing sensitive topics such as violence or politics. If in doubt about the appropriateness of topics, materials or activities, staff should seek the advice of a senior member of the teaching staff.

Staff should not enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.

26. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images. Staff need to be aware of the potential for these images to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc. in the teaching environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Using images of children for publicity purposes will require the consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

When recording images the following guidance should be followed:

- staff should be clear about the purpose of the images and what will happen to them after the activity/lesson;
- staff should ensure that a senior member of staff is aware when, where and why images are being created;
- staff should be able to justify images of children in their possession and ensure that all images are available for scrutiny;
- staff should avoid making images in one-to-one situations;
- if a photograph is displayed publicly, avoid naming the pupil;
- if the pupil is named publicly, avoid using their photograph;
- senior staff should establish whether images used for publicity purposes will be retained for further use;
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.



27. Internet Use

Using school time or equipment to access any inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, is unacceptable. Staff should be careful not to open emails that may contain pornographic spam in front of students.

Whether at work or at home, accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

28. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their serious concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion, as described by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Where the welfare of children may be at risk, staff should bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and if necessary, relevant external agencies. Concerns may include any behaviour by other colleagues that raises concern.

29. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should know the name of the school's designated member of staff for safeguarding, and the deputy and know and follow safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to record and report any child protection concerns to their designated person or deputy person for safeguarding.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to senior staff. Early discussion with a parent or carer could avoid any misunderstanding.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with pupils so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.