

Safeguarding Children Policy

2018-19

Reviewed: October 2018

Next Review: June 2019

Section A

Safeguarding Children Policy

The British International School of Tbilisi recognises its duty of care and responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. This policy applies to all staff, students, teachers and volunteers working in the school. Each child is unique and deserves attention and respect. This document provides the basis for good practice within the school for child protection work. The procedures provide a framework to ensure that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent and **that the school takes every reasonable measure to ensure every child is healthy and safe.**

BIST aims to provide a caring, secure and stimulating environment where each child can thrive and has the opportunity to develop their full potential. A child's welfare is paramount and every child has the right to be protected from harm, whatever their colour, race, culture, gender, age, nationality, religion or ethnicity. BIST takes this responsibility seriously and promotes a safer environment for children to learn and develop high self-esteem and a true feeling of self-worth, to become confident individuals who are able to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Aim

BIST fully recognises the contribution it makes to the Safeguarding of Children.

There are three main elements to our policy:

- a) Prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils.
- b) Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward sign of abuse.
- c) Support to pupils who may have been abused.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school and at BGA.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with children have a responsibility to protect children from harm. There are key people within BIST who have specific responsibilities to safeguard children:

Principal – main role is to initiate any case of suspected abuse of a child, receive a written report and make a decision on severity and next step of action. The Principal also meets with the parents/carers to discuss the suspected abuse.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants - all staff at BIST are trained in Safeguarding and are open to approach from anyone with a safeguarding concern.

Safeguarding at BIST: Prevention

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention. The school will therefore:

- a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- b) Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- c) Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help;
- d) Include, in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills;
- e) Provide annual training for staff on safeguarding and following safer recruitment procedures.

Safeguarding Procedure: Key points

a) The school has a **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**, who has undertaken appropriate child protection training. ***This is currently the BIST Principal who chairs the safeguarding group and will be the liaison with the BGA safeguarding team. The BIST Safeguarding Team will be made up of the DSL, a teacher from KS1, KS2 and KS3/4, an administration team member and the school doctor.***

b) Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the designated person and her/his role.

- c) Ensure that members of staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a child (or third party) who may tell of abuse.
- d) Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child safeguarding by setting out its obligations in this policy and in other key literature. Mention the policy and refer to it at appropriate points.
- e) Provide appropriate training for all staff. A Safeguarding / Child protection update should be carried out yearly and as part of new staff induction. This should take the form of face-to-face sessions with language and prior knowledge appropriate groups. Staff should also follow the refresher course available on Educare annually.
- g) Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at any case conferences, core groups and safeguarding review conferences.
- h) Keep written and/or electronic records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to parents or other organisations.
- i) Ensure all records are kept secure.
- j) Apply safer recruitment procedures by insisting on the following:
 - i) completion of a BIST application form,
 - ii) 2 references from previous employers,
 - iii) original copies of teaching licence and qualifications, and
 - iv) ensuring the criminal background of applicants for vacant posts are checked in accordance with DfES circular 11/95 *Misconduct of Teachers and Workers with Children and Young People and Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education (2006)*. This is done through the COBIS DBS service for UK nationals. (Local police clearance certificates are acceptable in translation if the country supplying such certificates appears on the COBIS database).
 - v) Recruiting staff or external agency recruiters should be trained in safer recruitment (Educare course is available)
- k) The director is the designated member of the school's directorate with oversight of safeguarding policy and practice.
- l) Although every case may be different, the general checklist attached (Annex A) will be used to guide action.
- n) Encourage parents to let school know about any change in circumstances, injuries or accidents and where there may be temporary care in place so we can monitor students and offer support.

BIST Safeguarding: Supporting the student at risk

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The school will endeavour to support the student through:

- a) The content of the curriculum to encourage self esteem and self motivation.
- b) The school ethos and behaviour policy which (i) promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment (ii) gives students a sense of being valued.
- d) Liaison with other agencies who support the student.
- e) Keeping records and monitoring in case there is a recurrence of a concern. When students on the child protection register leave, we will transfer information to the new school immediately.
- f) A confidential safeguarding reference request is sent to all previous schools during the admissions process.

NB – For all pupils we will look for opportunities to ensure they can keep themselves safe, recognise abuse and encourage communication. This may be in PSHE, Mentor group discussions, e-safety reminders and in assemblies.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

We recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment, emotional or behaviour problems will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Section B: Procedural Guide - Safeguarding

ALLEGATIONS

Suspicious of abuse:

A written report must be presented to the school Principal, who will initiate a case, and decide if the matter needs to be referred to the Director and local authorities. The Principal will meet with the parents and decide on further action if appropriate.

Allegations of abuse made against staff:

Any allegation against school staff, whether historical or contemporary, must be dealt with by the Principal and the Director (unless the allegation is against one of them). The Principal and the Director will determine the validity of any allegation and decide on further action, i.e. police investigation.

BULLYING

The school does not tolerate bullying in anyway. We are dedicated to creating a safe and comfortable environment for all students. BIST will not tolerate physical or verbal harassment of students or staff members, and disciplinary action will be taken with individuals who choose this behaviour. Students and staff are asked to report acts of bullying immediately to the school office. See Anti-Bullying Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be respected by everyone working with children. A guarantee of confidentiality should never be given to a child as information may need to be shared with relevant others.
- UK law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. In the event of any conflict with local law, the school will consult its legal advisor.
- Staff members party to any knowledge about a reported safeguarding issue should ensure confidentiality and should not discuss the issue with other staff, students or parents.

ENSURING A SECURE ENVIRONMENT

Staff should challenge any person not wearing identification or visitor badges within the school grounds. Staff should report and challenge any suspicious behaviour around the school perimeters. All staff have a professional responsibility to report any inappropriate actions or conduct by a member of staff or school community.

RECORD KEEPING

Individual staff should log any concerns they may have about the welfare of a student, and inform the Principal. Confidential records are maintained by the Principal, and are kept secure and separate from other school records. Relevant teaching staff are made aware of any reported information, on a 'need to know' basis. On transfer to another school, relevant information is passed to the designated member of staff.

Final points

Do not hesitate to talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if you have even the slightest concern about a child's well-being. Whilst a concern may be unfounded, it is necessary to 'think the unthinkable'.

There are four recognised forms of abuse:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

Within these recognised forms of abuse, it must be understood that we include abuse by a parent/carer, a staff member, a peer group member or another member of the school or victim's community.

If you suspect any of the above, it is your responsibility to report it immediately.

Relevant Supporting Documents and Policies

[Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Procedures](#), [Anti Bullying Policy](#), [Cause for Concern Reporting Form](#), [Historical Abuse Allegations Procedures](#), [Image Use Policy](#), [Intimate Care Policy](#), [Safer Recruitment Policy](#), [Staff Safeguarding Code of Conduct](#), [Visitors and Volunteers Policy](#), [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Annex A

Guidance for staff receiving a disclosure

If a student makes a disclosure of a safeguarding nature, please follow these guidelines:

1. *Never promise or offer confidentiality. Explain that any disclosure will have to be passed on, but that it will be handled sensitively and discreetly.*
2. *Offer support and verbal comfort.*
3. *Encourage the discloser to give a full account in a place away from public hearing if possible.*
4. *Do not make notes during the disclosure, but make them immediately after.*
5. *Send notes and speak directly to DSL immediately. Do not discuss the issue with anyone else first. Notes should include:*
 - a. *Disclosers name and details*
 - b. *Names and details/relationships of others mentioned in the disclosure*
 - c. *Times and locations*
 - d. *What happened?*
 - e. *Comments on any physical evidence*
6. *Any disclosure should be reported.*

A similar process should be followed if a third party is disclosing.

Annex B

Safeguarding Procedure Checklist for the Designated Safeguarding Lead

All concerns should be written down and handed to the DSL or entered as a concern in Engage (which automatically go to the DSL). Then, depending on the case, a blend of the following actions will be taken and the date of the action noted (either on this form or on the engage system).

Name: _____ Class / Mentor group: _____

Possible actions	Date
Record the incident and ask a small group of relevant staff to monitor	
Consult with colleagues for advice where appropriate. Link up with any agencies in Georgia.	
Sensitively interview staff	
Talk to all staff involved with the child and ask for close monitoring	
Speak to the child sensitively	
Sensitively interview peers	
Call one or both parents to discuss disclosure	
Ask parents to take the child to hospital for tests	
If the concern is about the parents, contact the organisation of the parents and report findings to the company's nominated welfare officer	
If the concern is about a child from a diplomatic mission with a community support officer, contact the designated officer to raise concerns	
In the case of all serious concerns inform the Director	
Keep records of all discussions and conversations (preferably signed by participants).	
Provide extra levels of staffing/vigilance as appropriate	
Recommend counselling	
Use the resources that may be available in Georgia	

ALWAYS REMIND THOSE INVOLVED IN DISCLOSURES OF CONFIDENTIALITY

British International School of Tbilisi

Yearly reminders	Date
Schedule child protection as part of annual refresher (Autumn INSET)	
Put item on all agenda as a regular reminder	
Ensure there is an assembly on e-safety which includes child protection reminders	
Give all students information about how to communicate concerns and key people who they can disclose to	
Give all students details of the Child Helpline number in Georgia	
Regularly remind parents of school policies and ensure that the location of the safeguarding policy is given to all new parents	
Regularly remind teaching staff and parents of confidentiality and maintaining boundaries	