Introduction

- The British International School of Brussels fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.
- Our policy applies to all appointed staff working in the school.

Relevant School Aims

- To sustain a friendly, safe and interesting environment that stimulates and encourages the fascination of learning.
- To develop good home-school interaction and together improve the quality of learning.
- Help the children develop a sense of right and wrong as the foundation for relationships, alongside consideration of the rights, feelings and well-being of all others.

Appendices

Recognising abuse
There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children.
2. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
3. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
4. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

1 Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed. Obtain professional references from previous employees, preferably from at least 2 different locations. Monitor staff for any inappropriate behaviour or comments during their probationary period in school.

2 We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:
   - Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
   - Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
   - Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

3 We will follow procedures taking account of guidance issued by the UK Department for Education
   - Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
   - Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
   - Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection. All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
   - Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
   - Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its procedures in the parents’ handbook.
   - Co-operate with relevant agencies as required, with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
   - Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
   - Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
4 Code of ethical practice for school staff

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our children.

All school staff should:
- place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations
- treat all members of the school community, including children, parents and colleagues with consideration and respect
- adhere to the principles and procedures contained in school policies involving safeguarding of children and in teaching and learning policies
- treat each child as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual need
- demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice
- recognise the power imbalances between children and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused
- understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a child is a criminal offence
- be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm
- encourage all children to reach their full potential
- never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or staff
- take responsibility for their own continuing professional development
- refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute
- value themselves and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children, the school community agrees to the following standards of good practice:

- treating all children with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving children in decision-making that affects them
- encouraging positive and safe behaviour among children
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in a child’s behaviour
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding all of the school’s safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, e-safety plans and information-sharing
- asking the child’s permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
• being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.

5 We 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. The 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 and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

• The content of the curriculum.
• The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
• The school behaviour policy which includes the aim of supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse that has occurred.
• Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil.
• Ensuring that, where a pupil with a legally documented experience of an incident of abuse leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately.
Appendix  Recognising abuse
To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.
There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical 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 (this used to be called Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse
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 for meeting the needs of another person. It may feature age – or developmentally-inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.
**Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying is thought to result in up to 12 child suicides each year.

All incidences of bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents are made aware of anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the head teacher and the responsible person will consider implementing child protection procedures.

**Indicators of abuse and what you might see**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they ‘tell’. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

Remember, it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other’s safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.
Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the person responsible to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

The impact of abuse
The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.