



The British International
School of Brussels

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The British International School of
Brussels

Ratified by Board on 21 February 2024

Next review due by: February 2026

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Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mrs. Alison Davies	02 736 89 81
Deputy DSL	Mrs. Jane Still	02 736 89 81
Designated Governor for Safeguarding (DGS)	Mrs. Helen Prescott	0474 56 58 52

1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.

2. Relevant United Kingdom (UK) Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the UK Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners (SOS Enfants, Schaerbeek Police, and Schaerbeek PMS).

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

Neglect is a form of abuse and 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. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following **safeguarding partners** will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- SOS Enfants

SOS Enfants ULB 02/535.34.25 Rue Haute, 322 à 1000 BRUXELLES

SOS Enfants Saint-Luc 02/764.20.90 Avenue Hippocrate, 10/2090 à 1200 BRUXELLES

- Schaerbeek Police: Av. de Roodebeek 66, 1030 Schaerbeek : 02/ 249 25 00
24h/24h if urgent

Local contacts : La Protection des Mineurs/Jeunesse Schaerbeek Police (from 9h-16h)

02/249 25 31 02/249 25 33

- Schaerbeek PMS (Promotion de la Sante à l'École) - two departments

Centre PMS Communal 1 (initial local contact)

2, rue Vifquin

1030 Schaerbeek

02/240 32 64 centrepmscommunal1@1030.be

SPSE

Service de Promotion de la Sante à l'École

02/215 96 11

02/216 42 40

4. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions (see section 10).
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Are known to be living in difficult situations - for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as domestic violence.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Are missing from education.
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the

safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

5.1 All staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex of the UK Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct Policy, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy, and the Behaviour Policy.
- Our safeguarding assessment framework and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as peer-on-peer abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation.
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Our DSL is **Mrs. Alison Davies** who is the Head of Pastoral Care and class teacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

When the DSL is absent, the deputy DSL, **Mrs. Jane Still**, who is the Deputy Head and class teacher- will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and safeguarding meetings and will support other staff to do so.

- Contribute to the assessment of children.

The DSL will also keep the Headteacher informed of any issues.

5.3 The Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the Belgian legislation, and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.
- Appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL.

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see Appendix 3).

All governors will read **Keeping Children Safe in Education** in its entirety.

5.4 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
 - Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
 - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, and for updating the content of the training regularly.
Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate.

6. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note - in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean "the DSL (or deputy DSL)".

7.1 If a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger

Make a referral to SOS Enfants if you believe a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to SOS Enfants or to the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process.

7.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place, or a pupil is at risk of FGM

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in Belgium (article 409 of the Penal Code) and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any **teacher** who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's services as appropriate.

Any **other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

7.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare:

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL or Headteacher is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from SOS Enfants. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as is practically possible.

Make a referral to SOS Enfants directly, if appropriate. Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or is unlikely to suffer from harm, or is not in immediate danger, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances, where the child is perceived to be in danger or is suffering from harm and the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from SOS Enfants or the Police.

7.6 If you have a mental health concern

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.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL or headteacher to agree a course of action.

7.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of governors.

The Headteacher/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix 3, if appropriate.

7.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent

7.9 Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of peer-on-peer abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Be vigilant with regard to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:

- How to recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports.
- That even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here.”
- That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to.
 - A friend may make a report.
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation.
 - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.
- That certain children may face additional barriers to disclosing information because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- The important role they have to play in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns.

7.10 Reporting systems for our pupils

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child’s wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse.
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils. This will be an ongoing process brought about and discussed through age-appropriate PSHE lessons, class discussions etc.
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views with a trusted adult who will listen to their concerns.

8. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

➤ For comprehensive details please refer to our Online Safety Policy.

9. Notifying parents or carers

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with SOS Enfants before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will notify the parents or carers of all the children involved, where appropriate.

10. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or disabilities, or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration of the issue.
- Pupils being more prone to peer-group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges, we offer extra pastoral support for these pupils. The DSL or Headteacher may recognise the need for referral to an appropriate outside agency if a child needs support to overcome extreme anxiety and communication issues, would liaise with the parents and discuss.

11. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies

11.1 Complaints against staff

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see Appendix 3).

11.2 Whistle-blowing

Refer to separate Whistle-blowing policy.

12. Record-keeping

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded (ideally on Engage). If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child for whom we have a concern.

All non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available and kept on file in the School Office.

Confidential information and records will be held securely on file and kept in the Headteacher's office and only accessible to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time, with a limit of 2yrs after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school and parents have given the name of the school in question, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and other services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

13. Training

13.1 All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings). Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

13.2 The DSL and Deputy DSL

The DSL and Deputy DSL will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

13.3 Governors

All governors will receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

The governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

13.4 Recruitment – interview panels

At least one person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the current contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See Appendix 2 of this policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

13.5 All staff are responsible for safeguarding.

All staff who have contact with children and families will be supported through regular opportunities to discuss any questions or concerns relating to safeguarding issues which allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

14. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher and with staff. At every review, it will be approved by the full Board of Governors.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Staff Code of Conduct

- Health and Safety
- Online Safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Anti-bullying
- Safer Recruitment
- Single Central Record

These appendices are based on the UK Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, but it may also occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- 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 participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

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
- 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 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).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Appendix 2: Refer to separate Safer Recruitment Policy.

Appendix 3: SOS Enfants

[https://www.one.be/fileadmin/user_upload/siteone/PRO/Brochures/SOS Enfants Brochure Professionnels 2014.pdf](https://www.one.be/fileadmin/user_upload/siteone/PRO/Brochures/SOS_Enfants_Brochure_Professionnels_2014.pdf)