



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

**St. Peter's International School
Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy**

Updated January 2025

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. We are also alert to signs of children in need such as those under severe academic pressures, at risk from eating disorders and mental health concerns.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and governors and to pupils on and off the school premises whilst they are the responsibility of the school.

We adhere to Portuguese legislation and are governed by Portuguese law. In relation to keeping children safe and reporting incidences where this safety is compromised, we follow the practice outlined in Law no. 147/99, of 1 September 1999, on the Protection of Children and Young People in Danger, Law no. 51/2012, of 5 September 2012, the Student's Statute and Educational Ethics and Law no. 113/2009, of 17 September 2009, which establishes a variety of measures concerning the protection of minors, in accordance with Article 5 of the European Council's Convention against Sexual Exploitation and the Sexual Abuse of Children.

Relevant statutory agencies and enforcing authorities are:

Escola Segura (PSP) (<https://www.psp.pt/Pages/atividades/programa-escola-segura.aspx>)

Comissão de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens (CPCJ) (<https://www.cnpdpcj.gov.pt/>)

Linha Crianças em Perigo Tel. 961231111

APAV - Associação de Apoio à Vítima Emergency Line: 116006 (apav.sede@apav.pt)

Rua José Estevão, 135A; 1150-201 Lisboa Tel: 213587900

1. Key Personnel | Contacts

Executive Head of School and DSL – Abigail Lewis– abigail.lewis@stpeters.pt

Head of National Section and Deputy DSL – Ana Rita Sousa – ana.sousa@stpeters.pt

Head of International Section and Deputy DSL – Samantha Goddard –

Samantha.goddard@stpeters.pt

DSL- Maria João Paiva- maria.paiva@stpeters.pt

2. Terminology

Although the words 'Safeguarding' and 'Child Protection' are often used interchangeably, they



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

have different meanings.

Safeguarding is what we do for all children and is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding should be child centred and should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all members of staff.

Child Protection refers to the procedures we use for children at risk of significant harm or who have been harmed. We acknowledge that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end, any concern in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare. Members of staff have day to day contact with pupils and as such are well-placed to observe possible signs of abuse and to report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Children have the right to be listened to whilst always considering their age, and in cases of disability, the required assistance will be sought. Students will be made aware of the process should they wish to discuss issues concerning their safety. As such, the school will distribute this policy annually to all parents and legal guardians and will communicate the interpretation of this policy annually to students.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday or who are in full time education.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting or guardianship role, for Example stepparents, foster carers, guardians and adoptive parents.

Child Protection Services - government agency responsible for providing child protection.

3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role is to:

- Receive and fully investigate any reported safeguarding concern
- Promote safeguarding to ensure that it is integral to St. Peter International School's ethos and practice
- Help ensure that all staff are familiar with and adhere to the Policy and ensure that staff sign to Indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure that regular training for staff on safeguarding is provided and to keep a record of staff Attendance at this training
- Contribute to staff INSET on safeguarding and child protection
- Help ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is annually updated, implemented and promoted
- Act as a first point of contact for, and act as a source of support, advice and expertise to, staff on issues of safeguarding
- Encourage a culture of listening to and taking account of pupils' wishes and feelings among the staff
- Keep an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the area of safeguarding including attending appropriate training



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

- Ensure that all relevant information around safeguarding is communicated to SLT and the nominated governor, and refer all cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or the police as appropriate usually following consultation with the school lawyer. Provide guidance on relevant matters to SLT and to other members of staff as appropriate
- Contribute to the content and delivery of the PSHE programme with regard to safeguarding
- Make the Safeguarding Policy available to parents
- Maintain accurate, full, thorough, confidential and up-to-date documentation on all cases of safeguarding, and securely stores them
- Help plan induction of all new staff in safeguarding
- Develop and maintain effective reporting and recording systems for all safeguarding issues
- Ensure that information regarding safeguarding is passed onto the new school of a pupil where there have been safeguarding issues

The deputy designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The governing body ensures that the school has:

- a DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken advanced child protection training
- a Safeguarding policy and procedures, reviewed at least annually and made available to parents
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Head of School are identified in the Whistle Blowing Policy and with reference to the guidance for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff
- safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks
- a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Senior Leadership Team receive child protection training annually, with external refresher training at three-yearly intervals; and the DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's child protection provision

The governing body nominates a member to be responsible for liaising with the local agencies in the event of allegation being made against the Head of School.

The Executive Head of School:

- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DSLs and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

- ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

Key people and training

Each section of the school has a Section Safeguarding Lead who work with the School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Please see separate procedures document for further details of who these are and how to contact them.

Training will be provided for all staff on a two-yearly basis with yearly updates at the start of the school year. New staff will receive training as part of the induction programme.

The specific responsibilities of all staff are:

To have read the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and to comply with it.

To report any matters of concern to one of the Safeguarding Leads or the DSL. (If the concern involves another employee, they should be referred to the Head of School).

To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns.

4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) role is to:

Receive and fully investigate any reported safeguarding concern

- Promote safeguarding to ensure that it is integral to ethos and practice
- Help ensure that all staff are familiar with and adhere to the Policy and ensure that staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure that regular training for staff on safeguarding is provided and to keep a record of staff attendance at this training
- Contribute to staff INSET on safeguarding and child protection
- Help ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is annually updated, implemented and promoted
- Act as a first point of contact for, and act as a source of support, advice and expertise to, staff on issues of safeguarding
- Encourage a culture of listening to and taking account of pupils' wishes and feelings
- among the staff
- Keep an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the area of safeguarding including attending appropriate training
- Ensure that all relevant information around safeguarding is communicated to SLT and the nominated governor, and refer all cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or the police as appropriate usually following consultation with the school lawyer. Provide guidance on relevant matters to SLT and to other members of staff as appropriate
- Contribute to the content and delivery of the Citizenship Development Subject



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

- Make the Safeguarding Policy available to parents.
- Maintain accurate, full, thorough, confidential and up-to-date documentation on all cases of safeguarding, and securely stores them.
- Help plan induction of all new staff in safeguarding.
- Develop and maintain effective reporting and recording systems for all safeguarding issues
- Ensure that information regarding safeguarding is passed onto the new school of a pupil where there have been safeguarding issues

The deputy designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

5. The governing board ensures that the school has:

- a DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken advanced child protection training
- a Safeguarding policy and procedures, reviewed at least annually and made available to parents
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Executive Head of School is identified in the Whistle Blowing Policy and with reference to the guidance for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff
- safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate
- a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Executive Head of School receive child protection training annually, with external refresher training at three yearly intervals; and the DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's child protection provision
- The governing body nominates a member to be responsible for liaising with the local agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Executive Head of School.

Executive Head of School

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DSLs and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings.
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures.
- ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

6. Abuse of trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. Support for those involved in a child protection issue.

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person (DSL) who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- nominating separate link people for the child and member of staff, where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, to avoid any conflict of interest.

If you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's **whistleblowing policy** enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Executive Head of School. Complaints about the Executive Head of School should be reported to the Regional CEO.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Executive Head of School. Allegations against the Executive Head of School should be reported to the CEO.

The procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part four:

Allegations of abuse made against other teachers and staff in the Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025 document.



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff and governors will receive training during their induction. All staff, including the Executive Head of School and senior team will receive training that is updated at least every three years and the DSL will receive advanced training updated at least every two years. In addition to formal training, the DSL should update their knowledge e.g. via e-bulletins and reading at least annually. Staff members will receive safeguarding and child protection updates – both through staff meetings and electronic updates - as required but at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively.

Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff. Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form
- provide two referees, including a request to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- where possible, provide an enhanced DBS certificate
- be checked through the Teacher Services' system, the EEA regulating authority or similar authority based upon all countries in which they have been working as appropriate to their role
- if applying for a management position, be checked to ensure they do not have a prohibition to manage order
- be formally interviewed.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection policy and identification of their child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy along with KCSIE (Sept 2019) Part 1 and that they have read and understood these documents.

7. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

- Ensure that photos are only taken on school devices: school iPads and school mobile phones. Please bear in mind that photos taken on iPads will be transferred to our shared drive on a monthly basis and then deleted from the iPad. Photos on our server will only be kept more than a year with parental permission.
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs or videos that are taken of them.

8. Safety (and use of devices)

Mobile phones and computers are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations online, webcam filming, photography or face-to-face meetings. The school will provide guidance for staying safe online and recognises that whilst a filter system is in place, appropriate access to the internet is important for pupils to learn how to maintain their safety online. Cyber-bullying by pupils, via texts, emails or any other social media, will be treated as seriously, if not more seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Generally speaking, due to the fact it is normally done to such a potentially wide audience, cyberbullying will be treated more seriously than more conventional bullying techniques.

Guidance on use of mobile devices by teaching staff:

The following points apply to all staff and volunteers working within at SPIS.

They apply to all mobile devices including phones and tablets:

- Unless not accessible, e.g. on a remote trip, staff should only use school iPads, phones, cameras or other devices such as personal messages, phone calls or social media in the presence of the children. Personal digital cameras can be used, but not if they have a 3 or 4G function
- Staff must ensure that no illegal or inappropriate content is stored on their mobile device
- Should any staff member become aware of inappropriate use of a mobile device they are obliged to report it to SLT
- Staff should remind parents regularly of school policy with regard to mobile device use with the following statement, when announcing events, on programmes for events or on school trips where parents may volunteer: 'You may photograph your child at this event providing the images are for personal use only (e.g. a family album). Please be aware these images (which may include other children) must not be shared on social networking sites or other web-based forums.'

9. Types of abuse and safeguarding issues



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.” (WHO, 1999, pp 14) A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting. Children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

Child abuse is defined in four categories; Neglect, Emotional abuse, Physical abuse and Sexual Abuse. The following are definitions as defined by DfE (2016) and NSPCC (2017)

Physical abuse is when a child is deliberately hurt and presents injuries such as bruises, burns, cuts or broken bones. It cannot be excused. In most cases physical abuse can cause serious and long-lasting harm and in extreme cases it can lead to death.

Emotional abuse is when a child is continuously maltreated. Emotional abuse can harm a child’s development and mental health which often involves humiliation, fear, isolation and neglect. Generally, children who experience emotional abuse tend to also be going through another form of abuse though one can’t assume that this is always the case.

Sexual abuse is when a child is forced and enticed to participate in sexual activities which may involve violence. Sexual abuse can also take place through non-contact activities such as forcing a child to look at sexual images or activities, or grooming a child in inappropriate ways often in preparation for abuse.

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.

Grooming takes place when a stranger or someone they know attempts to connect emotionally with a child to obtain their trust. This usually is intended for sexual exploitation or abuse. Grooming can occur online or face to face and often children are not aware that they are being groomed and therefore abused.



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

Online abuse is any type of abuse that occurs on the internet through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Online abuse can be instigated by strangers but also by people they know. Their images and videos can be shared and stored with other people. The abuser can contact them any time and in their safe places such as their homes.

Cyber bullying is often considered as a form of abuse which happens on social media, online games, phones and any other means of electronic devices. Cyber bullying can lead children and young people to self-harm, pressuring them into hate and sexual conversations. Above are examples of abuse, however, possible other types of abuse will be investigated.

PEER ON PEER ABUSE Peer-on-peer abuse refers to situations where children or young people are abused by their peers. It can take many forms including bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery), and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers and should be clear about the school's policy on peer-on-peer abuse.

Indicators of abuse: 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.

Definitions taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, September 2025).

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 senior person.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused 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



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late s
- how 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 schoolwork
- 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 DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

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. The school will do everything in its power to reduce the impact of abuse as far as is possible during the time that the child is in our care.

The action points for this will vary from child to child depending on the type of abuse, their age, circumstances and personal development.

Recognising Children in Need

We seek to keep children safe by highlighting and welfare concerns to the DSLs of the relevant school section. These welfare concerns may include, but are not limited to, severe academic pressure, concerns regarding eating and mental health issues.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Records Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

the public domain does not compromise evidence. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, Executive Head, Inspired Head of Safeguarding or CEO.

That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis. Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate • kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Executive Head of School. The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. Sharing information with relevant agencies is permissible, where that information may help to protect a child.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity,



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

religion, disability or sexuality

- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- At risk of HBV (Honour Based Violence)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

10. Reporting a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue

Taking action

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, **call** 112 or GNR.
- report your concern to the DSL immediately
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern on Wellbeing manager on iSAMS the same working day
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the Wellbeing manager on iSAMS to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

If a pupil discloses to you it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they cannot promise confidentiality and may need to pass the information on –



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the pupils staff will

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and collected – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil’s mother think about all this
- tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the designated senior person. Otherwise, it is the duty of the member of staff to inform the DSL of what has been discussed. If the pupil does agree to go and see the designated person, the staff member should inform the DSL that the child will be coming to see them at some point
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on iSAMS wellbeing manager
- seek support if they feel distressed

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. Referral to children’s social care (Comissão de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens) The DSL will make a referral to the Comissão de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. The care of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Reporting directly to child protection agencies, Staff will follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with Comissão de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens or police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding person, their deputy, the Executive Head of School and the CEO are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety

Child Protection Services in Portugal

Child Protection in Portugal is overseen by the local Comissões de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens (CPCJ). Their mission is to act in the promotion of children's and young people's rights and to prevent or put an end to situations which are susceptible of affecting their safety, health, training, education or their full development.

All School's intervention must be articulated in agreement with the parents, legal representatives or guardian of the student and managed in a way as to always preserve the student's and the family's right to privacy.

However, the School must intervene regardless of the mentioned agreement in the following situations:

- a) When the parents, legal representative or guardian oppose the school's intervention, the Executive Head of School must immediately communicate the situation to the CPCJ competent in the student's area of residence or, if none exists, to the Public Prosecutor (Ministério Público) at the Minors and Family Court (tribunais de família e menores);
- b) When the facts that determined the situation of danger to the student constitute a crime, they must be communicated to the Public Prosecutor or to the Police;
- c) When there is a current or imminent danger to the student's life or physical integrity and there is opposition from the parental authority, the School must adopt the adequate measures for their immediate protection and request the Court's or the Police's intervention;
- d) When the behaviour of a student constitutes a crime, the Public Prosecutor must be informed if the student is aged 12 to 16; if the student is under 12 years old, the CPCJ should be informed;
- e) If the student fails to abide by the measures set to compensate or recover from exceeding the allowed number of absences to class or if they are ineffective, the School has the



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

obligation to communicate this fact to the child protection committee or, if there is none in the relevant area, to the Public Prosecutor at the Minors and Family Court. The purpose is to try and find an adequate solution to the student's academic path, in collaboration with the School;

f) When the student is suspended in the context of a disciplinary procedure, the School's Executive Head of School can decide that, considering the circumstances, apart from the immediate communication that must be made to the parents or legal guardian, the suspension must

be communicated to the child protection committee or to the Public Prosecutor at the **Minors and Family Court;**

g) When the parents, legal representatives or guardian repeatedly breach their duties towards the student in terms of (i) compliance with enrolment, attendance and punctuality, without any justification, (ii) attending School meetings when the student reaches half of the accepted limit of absences or mandatory hearings in the context of a disciplinary procedure involving the student, and (iii) overseeing the compliance by the Student of measures of compensation or recovery, of the activities of integration in the school and in the community set as disciplinary sanctions or corrective measures following a disciplinary procedure, or the student's failure to attend appointments or therapies prescribed by specialised technicians, the School has an obligation to communicate this situation to CPCJ or to the Public Prosecutor.

Please note: Any person who has knowledge of a situation of danger to a student can communicate it to the School. The School will have to evaluate the situation and attempt to provide protection compatible to its own attributions. If it considers that its intervention is not adequate or sufficient, it must immediately communicate this fact to the local CPCJ.

11. Procedures for handling allegations against staff, governor, volunteer or contractor

Executive Head of School will deal with any allegations made by a student against a member of staff or volunteer. The CEO will deal with any allegations made by a student against the Executive Head of School.

In the event of an allegation against staff, volunteer or contractor, one of the DSLs will make immediate contact with the Child Protection Services in Portugal or with the Public Authorities, when warranted (see Appendix 2) without investigating, within one working day.

Discussions are recorded in writing and communication with students and parents agreed. In borderline cases, these discussions can be held informally with the Child Protection Services in Portugal and without naming the individual basis.

Parental consent and cooperation is desirable throughout the process of referral to the Child Protection Services or to any Public Authorities in Portugal or the Police, although there are



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

situations where parental agreement should be bypassed (see Appendix 2).

The School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against any unwanted publicity in any cases of allegations against teachers and volunteers until and unless the person is charged with an offence.

The Executive Head of School and Child Protection Services in Portugal will need to take into account the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to the student concerned or to other students, and the possibility that evidence will be tampered with, as well as the

interests of the person concerned and the School and the need for a full and fair investigation.

Suspension is determined under the applicable legislation and would not be a disciplinary sanction and would be on full pay. Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation.

Should the School no longer require the services of an employee, contractor or volunteer because they are considered unsuitable to work with children (meeting the DBS referral criteria) then this will be reported to the Child Protection Services in Portugal and DBS if appropriate.

Parental agreement should try to be obtained but it is not mandatory before referring to the Child Protection Services in Portugal or the Police. If the matter is urgent, the School may bypass parental agreement altogether although it should always try to obtain their cooperation, even if only after the referral is submitted.

[Having contacted the Child Protection Services in Portugal, the Head of School may choose to appoint a 'case manager'.](#)

Disclosure of information: The case manager will inform the accused person of the allegation as soon as possible after the Child Protection Services in Portugal has been consulted. The parents or carers of the child(ren) involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. Where the Child Protection Services in Portugal advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or the Child Protection Services in Portugal need to be involved, the case manager should not inform the accused or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed. The parents or carers should be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The reporting restrictions preventing the identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation in certain circumstances will be observed.

Resignation: If a member of staff (including the Executive Head of School) or a volunteer or contractor tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the School in accordance with this policy and a referral will be made to the DBS as soon as possible if the criteria are met, that is they have caused harm or pose a risk of harm to a child, (and a separate referral will also be



Reference

Date: 03.03.2025

Name: Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

made as soon as possible to the National College for Teaching and Leadership in cases of serious professional misconduct of teachers).

Ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation; and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.

Where a teacher (including the Executive Head of School) has been dismissed, or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned, in circumstances where the threshold for a DBS referral

have not been met, separate consideration will be given to whether the matter should be referred to the National College for Teaching and Leadership and the appropriate authorities in Portugal. This will include matters where there has been unacceptable professional conduct, conduct which may bring the teaching profession into disrepute, conviction at any time of a relevant offence or where a prohibition order may otherwise be appropriate.

Unsubstantiated, false or malicious allegations: Where an allegation by a pupil or member of staff is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Executive Head of School will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's **Staff Concerns Policy**.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Head of School will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the School on the basis that they have treated the school or a member of staff unreasonably.

Record keeping: Details of an allegation will be recorded on the employee's file and retained at least until the employee retires and ceases to work in any capacity for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, if this is longer. Allegations proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, will not be referred to in any employer reference.

Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records