



POLICY STATEMENT FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

British School of Tirana

Reviewed by: Olta Mema May 2025	Due for review: June 2026
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RATIONALE

To maintain the highest standards at the British School of Tirana (BST), the Board of Directors has accepted a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children taking into account current UK and Albanian guidance and legislation:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 2004
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (updated August 2018)
- Working Together To Safeguard Children 2024
- Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015

It is therefore the responsibility of ALL STAFF* to be aware of their duties and to comply with BST policy and procedures to protect children. To that end, BST works with parents and guardians to protect the best interest of the child. All members of staff are required to sign a register confirming that they have read the key documents, including Keeping Children Safe In Education 2016 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

*Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers **ALL** adults on site, including ancillary supply and self- employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children, governors and trainee teachers. Teachers from agencies are not used by the school.

Key roles and responsibilities:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads – Olta Mema
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Eriona Qoku
- Designated Safeguarding Governor – Aida Brei
- Named Safeguarding Director – Peter Maunder

PURPOSE

BST staff hold that the welfare of all pupils is paramount and the protection of the pupil is their primary consideration. Whenever there is a cause for concern, the school has a duty to act to protect the pupil and to take the necessary measures to inform the appropriate body of this concern. This should happen with parental permissions but can happen without.



POLICY

Staff are encouraged to use their well-informed professional judgement when interacting with pupils and work within the 'Staff Code of Conduct'. They are also provided with up-to-date guidance from Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The Board of Directors and Proprietors exercise due diligence when employing staff and follow guidance from the UK DFE Standards for British schools overseas and Albanian legislation.

The standard on the suitability of staff is met if— (a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 of that Act;

(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 or section 142 of the Education Act 2002, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction or any equivalent order made in the host country or overseas;

(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person— (i) the person's identity;

(ii) the person's medical fitness;

(iii) the person's right to work in the host country;

(iv) where appropriate, the person's qualifications; and

(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, checks are made, to the extent possible, on the person's suitability to work with children. This could include (for example) checks in the host country and any overseas countries where the person has lived (such as certificates of good conduct from the relevant embassies or police forces or a suitable criminal records check) and these are taken into account before confirming the appointment; and in the light of the information from the checks referred to in paragraphs (c) to (d) the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the position to which the person is appointed.

(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) must be completed before a person's appointment.

Regular training is given to all staff and a record is monitored termly to highlight staff in need of refresher training. Staff new to the school are provided with training within the first half term of appointment.



Volunteers working in school are also given detailed guidelines re: safeguarding children and procedures for when there may be a Child Protection concern. Volunteers work within the school's Staff Code of Conduct.

Parents also have access to guidance on Safeguarding Children in School

Roles and Responsibilities:

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within the school and Board who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures.

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make appropriate, timely referrals to the appropriate Albanian authorities in accordance with school procedures.

The Director of Operations ensures that all volunteers have child protection training (provided by her) and will always be with a member of staff who has appropriate Child Protection training.

The role of the Named Safeguarding Director for Child Protection is to ensure that the school has an effective policy, that the guidelines are complied with and to support the school in this aspect. Directors must not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached; however a record of all child protection issues is maintained centrally with outcomes shared confidentially with the named director (Chair).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director and Heads of school)

It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures established by the Board
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff. Deputy DSL is responsible for training non-English speaking admin staff (or teaching) staff.
- Ensure that the Board and SLT is kept informed of any significant concerns
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g., refer to appropriate authorities)



- Liaise with government social care teams over suspected cases of child abuse
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential'
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support

School Procedures:

If any member of staff working with children has any child protection concern, they **MUST** speak to a DSL without delay.

The member of staff should record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

The DSLs will decide whether the concerns should be referred to appropriate authorities. If it is decided to make a referral, this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

When to be concerned:

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he or she:

- Has any injury that is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with accidental injury.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Gives confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual or sexualised behaviour that is unusually explicit and /or inappropriate to his or her age/stage of development.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
- Any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.

Safeguarding in school is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problem emerge;
- protecting children and learners from maltreatment, including online abuse and exploitation;
- preventing impairment of children's and learners' mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children and learners are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth families or kinship networks wherever appropriate and in the child's best interest;



- undertaking that role so as to enable those children and learners to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child Protection in school is:

The overall name for: the procedure and activities that are to be undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

There are no absolute criteria or quantities with which to judge level of harm. In establishing our professional opinions and assessments we will consider:

- Degree and extent of physical harm
- Duration and frequency of abuse
- Extent of premeditation
- Presence of threat and coercion.

Whenever there is a cause for concern, the school has a duty to act to protect the pupil and to take the necessary measures to inform the appropriate body of this concern.

Early help focus

Staff are expected to identify children who may benefit from early help, particularly those who:

- Go missing from education, care, or home;
- Have experienced multiple fixed-term exclusions or are at risk of permanent exclusion;
- Have a parent/carer in custody or affected by parental offending.

Child abuse is:

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. Neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

The NSPCC states that an abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event. And it can increasingly happen online.

Types of child abuse (from NSPCC):

- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical



- Emotional abuse
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Bullying and cyber-bullying
- Domestic abuse
- Child trafficking
- Online Grooming and radicalisation
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Forced labour and modern slavery

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse:

All staff must be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, which can take many forms, but they are usually divided into four categories:

- Physical injury: can range from over-chastisement, slapping with the hand, a belt, a stick or other object, to shaking, punching or throwing a child.
- Neglect: can range from ignoring a child's developmental needs to not feeding or clothing her/him adequately and not supervising her/him adequately.
- Sexual abuse: is the involvement of a child or adolescent in sexual activities they do not understand, cannot give consent to and which are not acceptable by our society.
- Emotional abuse: ranges from rejecting a child, refusing to show a child love or affection, or deliberately making a child unhappy by continually belittling her/him or verbally abusing her/him.

Although divided into four categories for ease of description, the forms of abuse are often found together. All children should be protected from abuse but the school recognises that some children may have particular vulnerabilities, i.e. SEN, disability, Children Looked After, Young Carers.

Attendance and Absence Monitoring

Unexplained or persistent absences from education may indicate safeguarding concerns, including risk of exploitation. All such absences must be monitored and investigated in line with our attendance policy.



Dealing with a disclosure:

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said and allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which might not be possible to keep
- Do not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to appropriate Children's Services
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to share
- **Listen**, rather than ask direct questions
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Make a written record **after** the disclosure (see Record Keeping, below)
- Pass information to a DSL without delay

Record Keeping:

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation
 - Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
 - Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
 - Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury
 - Record statements and observations rather than interpretations, assumptions or opinions
- It is important that what is recorded is kept factual, and includes reported speech where appropriate. All records need to be signed and given to a DSL promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. Records should be kept in a secure location, separate to the child's usual school record.

Confidentiality:

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff and volunteers in our school, and must be handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

- All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Albanian Social Services and the Police).



Peer to Peer Abuse and Sexting

Where children have been involved in peer-to-peer abuse, the children will be given an opportunity to voice their perspective individually with a suitably trained member of staff. Parents will be informed of the issues and records will be kept in line with all child protection concerns. If relevant, the parents will then be given the opportunity to take this further (with external agencies, e.g. police). Regular monitoring of this situation will then be undertaken (see anti - bullying policy).

- Staff or volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

Guidance for staff in regard to relationships with pupils

1. Staff are advised that in their relationships with pupils' attitude, demeanour and language all require proper care and thought and should be appropriate to the age, gender and maturity of the pupils.
2. When using teaching material of a sensitive nature teachers should be vigilant as to the possibility of misinterpretation and if in doubt should consult with senior staff.
3. Staff should be aware of their vulnerability when conducting one-to-one interviews with pupils. These should, where possible, be held in a room with visual access or an open door.
4. Staff are advised not to have any unnecessary physical contact with pupils. In some circumstances physical contact will/may be necessary, such as when a child is distressed and needs comforting, when a child is injured and needs first aid, when a child needs cleaning after an accident or messy activity, when "hands-on" instruction is used in PE or sports. In all such situations, staff are advised to be aware of the danger of being misinterpreted and to ensure the presence of other children or staff whenever possible.
5. On residential and outside visits, staff should be aware of their increased vulnerability because of the more informal nature of such events.
6. In the unusual event where a pupil has to be physically restrained, staff are referred to the Positive Handling policy.

The school exercises the appropriate degree of confidentiality in all matters of child protection. The staff is informed on a need-to-know basis.

The school adheres closely to the most recent guidance from the Keeping Children Safe in Education document and Part One is given to all staff. Copies are also available in the school office and on the school website.



Allegations involving school staff or volunteers:

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and immediately inform the Head of school.

If any member of staff/volunteer has reason to suspect that another member of staff/volunteer may have abused a child at the school, or elsewhere, they must immediately inform the Head of school. They should also make a record of the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident/alleged incident.

The Head of school will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer to the Board. If the concerns are about the Head of school, then the Chair of Board should be contacted. The member of staff against whom an allegation has been made should not be informed of said allegation until future action is agreed with the Board. It may be necessary to discuss appropriate steps to ensure other children are not at risk.

If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to the Police or appropriate authority, the Board will advise the Head of school whether there needs to be an internal investigation and what should be recorded on the member of staff's personnel file. Staff who have an allegation made against them may also need support, which may include provision to ensure they are not working alone, counselling, representation and advice from a pastoral mentor within the school and flexible working arrangements where appropriate.

Whistleblowing:

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should refer to the 'whistleblowing' policy.

Children are also encouraged to raise concerns they may have about their peers or adults within their family, school or community.