



British School of Ulaanbaatar

3.5 - Safeguarding and Child Protection

The British School of Ulaanbaatar recognises its responsibilities for the promotion of the welfare and protection of the children in our care. Our safeguarding agenda covers the methods and steps we take as a community to;

- protect our children from maltreatment,
- support the health and development of our children
- provide our children with a safe and caring environment
- give our children the best chances to grow to adulthood successfully

Safeguarding our students is a responsibility shared by everyone who works or volunteers in any School, as is active and effective Child Protection. This is part of everyone's job at BSU, irrespective of their role. Safeguarding and child protection have different meanings whilst safeguarding promotes welfare, child protection refers to the specific actions that must be taken to protect children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children through the process of provision of education, members of the School community are well placed to observe the outward signs of harm being done to a child. The School will therefore establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, and ensure that all children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. Through pastoral support, different subject curricula and discussions during mentor periods, we facilitate children in the development of the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse. This policy applies to all staff (academic, administration and support), contractors, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors at BSU.

Children who witness or experience violence or are abused in any way may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives. When at School, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. All adults working at the School must be aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare, both physical and emotional, of every student inside and outside school. This involves ensuring that students are protected from significant physical or emotional harm and that there is a positive commitment to ensure the satisfactory development and growth of the individual.

Following best practice in the UK and Mongolia, the School will;

- Ensure we have designated members of staff for child protection who have received appropriate training and support for these roles.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and board member knows the name of the designated members of staff responsible for child protection and their specific roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated staff responsible for child protection;

- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;
- Ensure all records are kept securely in Administration, separate from the main student files;
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer;
- Develop effective links with relevant external agencies in the country and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters;
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

The School will endeavour to support students through;

- The content of the curriculum;
- The School vision and mission, which promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued (see [1.1 - The British School of Ulaanbaatar: Vision, Mission and Values](#));
- The School policies which are aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the school. The School will ensure that students know that some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- Ensuring that in the event a student leaves, BSU will ensure that the student's information and record is transferred to the new school.

It is vital that all staff and parents are made aware of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and to whom they should report any concerns.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) and Child Protection Officers (CPO)

The CPLO at the British School of Ulaanbaatar is the Head Master, supported by the School's two CPOs. All members of staff must understand what their roles are, and cases of suspected abuse should be reported to a CPO in the first instance.

The CPLO and CPOs will;

- ensure this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is updated and reviewed annually;
- keep confidential, detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals /concerns.
- ensure all parents are briefed on the contents of the child protection policy to alert them to the fact that the school may need to make referrals. Raising awareness may avoid subsequent conflict if the School must take appropriate action to safeguard a child;
- make themselves known to all staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and is aware of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures (see [3.6 - Provision of Intimate Care](#) and [3.7 - Use of Physical Force and Restraint](#)). Special consideration must be made for any members of staff who work part time or work with more than one school, such as peripatetic music teachers;
- act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the school and are responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals by liaising with relevant agencies over cases of abuse and allegations of abuse, regarding both students and members of staff;
- attend any relevant CPD courses and then ensure that any new or key messages are passed to other staff, volunteers and governors.

Child protection records should include the date, event and action taken. Reports prepared for child protection meetings should focus on the student's:

- Educational progress and achievements
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Participation
- Relations with other children and young people
- Appearance, where appropriate
- Interaction with other children and adults

If relevant, reports should include what is known about the student's relations with his or her family and the family structure. Reports should be objective and based on evidence. They should distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.

The School will:

- Make reports available to the student's parents prior to the child protection conference unless to do so would place the student at risk of significant harm;
- Provide written reports to the appropriate authorities, and arrange for an appropriate person from the school to attend meetings if required;
- Transfer any child protection records if the student moves schools.

The CPLO and CPOs also have an important role in ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training. All staff should have training in child protection through on-going CPD sessions. This should be relevant to their needs to enable them to identify and report any concerns immediately. They must be aware of how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case. Furthermore, nominated staff must have a working knowledge of how Child Protection systems operate in Mongolia.

Responsibilities of all Staff

If a member of staff suspects that a student is a victim of abuse or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk from abuse, they should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns. Students may confide in any member of the School community: they do not always go to teachers.

Staff to whom a disclosure is made should remember:

- They should not interrupt the student if he or she is freely recalling significant events. Any questions that may be needed to clarify what the student is saying should be framed in an open manner and you should not lead the student in any way. The role is to listen, not lead.
- Do not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality: this cannot be supported.
- Make notes of the discussion, as soon as possible (but within 24 hours) to pass on to one of the CPOs. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said, as this may be required to support subsequent legal action.
- Once a CLO or the CPLO have been informed, the responsibility of colleagues in terms of referring concerns ends at this point. Staff should be aware, however, that they may have future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the student, contributing to the assessment or implementing child protection plans.

- To safeguarding our students BSU has strict procedures for appointing staff (see **6.1 - Recruitment Policy and Procedures**). These procedures are updated regularly and must be followed in all cases without exception.

Private Meetings

Staff and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual students, parents or other visitors may place them at risk and give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, and detailed advice is provided in **5.1 – General Communication Policy**. Such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or an area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Another student or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. Meetings outside the School premises should not typically take place and thus only be arranged with the specified approval of the Head Master.

Signs of Child Abuse

All staff must be alert to signs of possible abuse and know to whom to report any concerns or suspicions. Individual indicators of abuse may not be particularly worrying in isolation, but in combination they can suggest that there is serious cause for concern.

Indicators of **physical** abuse may include:

Bruises

- To the eyes mouth or ears;
- Fingertip bruising (grasp mark);
- Bruises of different ages in the same place;
- Outline bruises (prints of hands, belts shoes, etc.);
- Bruises without obvious and verifiable explanations;

Burns, Bites and Scars

- Clear impressions of teeth (more than 3cm across unlikely to have been made by a child);
- Burns or scalds with clear outlines;
- Small round burns which may be from cigarettes;
- Large number of different aged scars;
- Unusually shaped scars;
- Scars that indicate the child did not receive medical treatment;

Other Injuries

- Poisoning, injections, ingestion or other applications of damaging substances including drugs and alcohol;
- Female genital mutilation (also referred to as female circumcision);

Indicators of **neglect** include children who are:

- Not receiving adequate food;
- Exposed to inadequate, dirty and or cold environments;
- Abandoned or left in circumstances without appropriate adult supervision which are likely to endanger them;

- Withheld from appropriate medical advice or treatment;

Indicators of **sexual abuse** include:

- Sexually transmitted diseases;
- Recurrent urinary infections;
- Genital and rectal itching and soreness;
- Unexplained bleeding and discharges;
- Bruising in genital region;
- Sexual play/masturbation that is inappropriate to a child's age, development and circumstances;
- Sexually abusive behaviour towards other children, particularly those younger and more vulnerable than themselves;
- Unexplained pregnancy;

Indicators of **emotional abuse** include:

- Abnormally passive, lethargic or attention seeking behaviour;
- Specific habit disorders, e.g. faecal smearing, excessive drinking, eating unusual substances and self-harm;
- Severely delayed social development, poor language and speech development not otherwise explained;
- Excessively nervous behaviour such as rocking or hair twisting;
- Low self-esteem;

The following indicators may occur to any children being abused but are particularly important in cases of sexual or emotional abuse where outward physical signs may not be present:

- Involuntary passing of urine;
- Sleeping and eating disturbance;
- Recurrent abdominal pains;
- Recurrent headaches;
- Social withdrawal;
- Restlessness and aimlessness;
- Inexplicable school failure;
- Poor trust and secretiveness;
- Indiscriminate and careless sexual behaviour;
- Self-mutilation and other forms of self-harm;
- Hysterical fits, faints, etc.

Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse

In all cases where staff have concerns that a student is being abused or is at risk of being abused (whether the student says anything or not) they must report their concerns to one of the CPOs. The CPO may, if necessary, interview the student to clarify the nature of an allegation or suspicion, before deciding on an appropriate course of action. If a student needs urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse, the CPO will notify both the CPLO and School Doctor and the student will be taken to the nearest hospital. The CPLO will inform the local authorities that the child has been taken to hospital and that it is suspected that abuse may have occurred. In case of serious harm, the police should be

informed from the outset.

In cases not requiring urgent medical attention the CPLO will discuss cases with, or refer cases to, the authorities and they will advise on the next step(s) to be taken. Whether or not to make a referral which could activate an investigation is a serious decision and will require careful judgement. In all cases it is essential that accurate written records are kept of all that has occurred stating the facts of the abuse, including timings, explanations, those present etc., and any action taken. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved should not be interviewed by staff (including the CPOs and the CPLO) beyond the point at which it is clear that there is evidence to make a referral to the relevant local authorities. The CPLO may wish to clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the student will be told that a referral has been made. A member of staff who knows the student best should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion to further the school's knowledge of the student.

Adults in schools are used to handling confidential information about children (see [5.2 – Data Protection Policy](#)) but such sensitive situations such as these may cause distress or even conflict when they must disclose such information. In cases of actual or suspected abuse the best interests of the child are paramount. Given their daily contact with students in a variety of situations, members of staff are vulnerable to allegations of abuse, whether deliberately or innocently false, malicious or misplaced. However, staff should avoid making their own judgements of whether an allegation is false or otherwise.

Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer must be reported immediately to a CPO or the CPLO. An allegation of abuse by a teacher or volunteer will be taken very seriously unless the allegation is demonstrably false. All such allegations will be investigated thoroughly. Pending a full investigation, the member of staff may be suspended from duty with pay: in no way is this considered an admission of impropriety. The quick, consistent and fair resolution of the allegation will be made a clear priority for the benefit of all concerned. External agencies may be contacted given the nature of the allegation; this decision would be taken by the Head Master in consultation with the Board of Directors. Staff may also face disciplinary action where, after investigation, serious concerns remain and there is evidence, even though external agencies may have decided that they are not able to proceed any further with the case. The School will notify anyone requesting a reference to work with children of any reason why the member of staff concerned may not be suitable to work with children. An allegation against a CPO must be notified to the CPLO immediately. An allegation against the Head Master (CPLO) should be notified to a CPO who is required will inform the Chair of the Board of Directors directly, without reference to the Head Master.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the School's practices and policies do not put children at risk, situations may exist that have been overlooked, or new situations which have developed, that need challenging on child protection grounds. No one should hesitate to take action to report concerns because of fear of possible repercussions. Any person who makes a report to the CPO in good faith of any concern or allegation about School practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other significant harm is assured that no retribution or disciplinary action will be taken.

Physical Contact with Students

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, parent or observer. Touching students, including well-intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on a shoulder, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their students. There may be occasions where a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting of the type a caring parent would give. The degree of such comfort is dependent on need, age and developmental maturity. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly repeatedly with the same student over time.

Some members of staff are likely to come into physical contact with students from time to time in the course of their duties. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a student physically to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption (see [3.7 – Use of Physical Force and Restraint](#)). Examples may be:

- A student attacks a fellow student or member of staff;
- Students are fighting;
- A student is engaged in deliberate vandalism to school property;
- A student is causing or is at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, medical need such as a seizure, rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;

In such cases, the member of staff should remain calm and wherever practicable tell the student to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. Judgement must be exercised before intervening physically – staff should not intervene in an incident without help (unless an emergency) if there is risk of injury to themselves. If intervention is necessary, only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the student. Where members of staff have taken action to restrain a student, they should make a written report of the incident and inform their Head of School and/or Head Master as soon as practical but within twelve hours of the incident. E-mail is an acceptable medium to do this.