

NOVASCHOOL SUNLAND INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Section I: Policy Rationale and Principles

The importance of child protection

Novaschool Sunland International recognises its duty and responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. It recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

This policy document provides the basis for good practice within the school for child protection work. The procedures provide a framework to ensure that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent and **that the school takes every reasonable measure to ensure every child is healthy and safe.**

This document also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff to ensure that statutory and other duties are met.

Guiding principles

Novaschool Sunland International is committed to the following principles:

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by child welfare organisations should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.

- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.

Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.

Measures

Staff recruitment

When recruiting new members of staff the school follows the guidance given in the Safeguarding Children:

Safer Recruitment in Education (2006), and school guidelines.

The following checks take place;

- Employment history through CVs
- CRB checks are undertaken with original copies viewed
- References are taken up and obtained and qualifications are verified

A Single Central Record (SCR) shall be maintained and kept in a secure place with limited access within the administration office. The SCR will remain a confidential document.

Training

Teachers will receive training in child protection as part of their CPD (Continuous Professional Development) programme.

Training is carried out by Kidscape

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People training which includes:

- Understanding broad definitions of child abuse and neglect
- Dealing appropriately with disclosures
- Having an awareness of how a child's race, culture, gender and ability inform an assessment of their needs
- Acting appropriately on suspicion/ knowledge that a child may be suffering harm
- Understanding the Child Protection system and professional roles within it
- Understanding how discrimination can impact on children and families
- Understanding both victim and offender behaviour

Dealing with allegations of abuse

Any allegations or suspicions of abuse must be referred immediately to the Principal.

A written record of concerns should be made using the schools internal recording forms. The Principal may consult with the child's parents or guardians in order to reach a decision on whether the matter needs referral to the relevant outside agency.

Referrals

The decision to refer a case to an outside agency is to be made by the Principal, in consultation with the SEND Department.

Child in Need

Referral should be considered when a child shows evidence that her/his health, development or achievement may be adversely affected.

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear.
- He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development.
- His/her health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the help from a child protection agency.

Child Requiring Protection

It should be considered a child protection matter for referral if:

- A child is at risk or suffering significant harm.
- A child is suffering the effects of significant harm.
- Serious health problems are in evidence.

It is the '**significant harm**' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life, in this case immediate referral. A professional making a child protection referral must therefore provide information that clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration.

Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events that are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider the family context, within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation.

A guarantee of confidentiality should never be given to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, including social service departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law where possible in the UK and in Spain.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some

circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

UK law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. In the event of any conflict with local law in this instance the advice of the school's legal team will be sought.

Dealing with allegations of abuse against a professional

Children can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer should therefore be taken seriously.

If an allegation is received by the Principal one needs to consider whether the professional has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations of abuse made against staff, whether historical or contemporary, should be dealt with by the Principal (if the allegation is against the Principal then it should be dealt with by the Senior Management Team).

The initial conversation will establish the validity of any allegation and if a referral is required.

The decision could be:

- Police investigation if there is a criminal element to the allegation

The fact that a member of staff offers to resign should not prevent the allegation procedure reaching a conclusion.

If a member of the schools staff is dismissed for abuse, but not convicted, a written report will be sent to the UK Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

Resources

Child protection is a matter for all members of staff.

The Senior Management Team have to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly including attending meetings, collating and writing assessment reports, and staff training.

Child protection awareness will be addressed through the PSHE curriculum as appropriate to ensure all the pupils understand what is meant by child protection and how they can be safe.

Updating

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and SMT.

Local Law

Implications of local law on the school's child protection policy

The school's policy on child protection draws principally from UK statutory guidelines and best practice with one significant adjustment to take into account Spanish Laws and regulations, by which the school is bound.

Spanish laws regarding the protection of children are similar to those in the UK in that there is a statutory obligation to refer instances of abuse to the local child protection agency.

Section II: Guidelines & Procedures Guidelines

Responsibility

Every member of staff at the school is responsible for contributing to the safety and well-being of pupils at Novaschool Sunland International. Being aware of the information below and following the guidelines contained there is a part of that responsibility.

Recognising when a child may be at risk

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

If any member of academic staff has significant concerns about the welfare of a child they should make them known to the Principal.

These concerns may include:

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

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in

normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including Cyber Bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

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.

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 (e.g. rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing, They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or 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.

Signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be considered if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree.

Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse.

It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone

Guidelines for listening and talking to children

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make a careful record of what was said verbatim
- Avoid leading the students with your questions
- Use open questions "Tell me, describe to me, show me, explain to me"

You should NEVER:

- Take photographs or examine an injury;
- Investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions;
- Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping ‘secrets’;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

Guidelines for record keeping

Well-kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm.

Records should:

- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Use the child’s words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- Be written in ink and signed by the recorder;

School staff and allegations of abuse

Academic staff should ensure that personal contact with children minimises the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur.

The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- Work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally.
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards.
- Must not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses
- Must not give pupils lifts home in cars
- Must not arrange to meet them outside of school hours
- Must not chat to pupils on the social websites

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent. Regardless of local laws, the school will report any such instance to the authorities in the UK.

In exceptional circumstances it may be essential to physically restrain a student to protect them from physical harm or physically harming another person. Any use of physical force or reasonable restraint against pupils will be documented. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or other parents must be informed.

Children will not be punished under any circumstances by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

Ensuring a secure environment

- Staff should challenge any person not showing identification or visitor badges within the school grounds.
- Staff should report and challenge any suspicious behaviour around the school perimeters.
- All staff have a professional responsibility to report any inappropriate actions or conduct by a member of staff or school community.

Procedures

Steps to take when you suspect a child may be at risk

1. Staff should report concerns and evidence to the Principal as soon as possible.
2. Together with the Principal make a record of the case.

Steps to take when a child reports abuse to a member of staff

1. Speak with the child following the guidelines for talking and listening to children
2. Make a record of the conversation following the guidelines for record keeping
3. Report the instance to the Principal with a copy of the record of your conversation.

Steps to be taken by the Principal

1. Collect and review evidence on the reported case. Actions may include:
 - Offer the opportunity for the child to disclose information
 - Contact parents to gather more information
 - Continue to gather information from further observations of behaviour or additional sources
 - Evaluate evidence with other members of SMT.
2. Where an external referral is deemed necessary, consult and obtain approval from SMT.