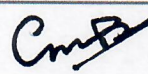
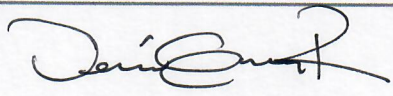


The British School Caracas Safeguarding Policy



Date policy agreed:	Approved SLT: Board:
Date of next review:	Review Date: September 2024
Head of School's signature:	 13/11/2023
Chair of The Board of Governors' signature	

Rationale

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. **Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.** In order to fulfill this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can give a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and their families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.'

[\(Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2023\)](#)

An International Task Force on Child Protection was set up in 2014 including Jane Larsson from CIS and as a result this statement was produced as a commitment for all of us involved in working with young people. The British School Caracas recognises and respects this statement as a guide for its approach to safeguarding children:

Statement of Commitment to Child Protection for Schools

The principles have been identified by the ITFCP School Evaluation Committee as being the minimum requirement of schools to provide safeguarding and child protection for its students:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.
- The school shall have in place formal learning programmes throughout the school experience related to child protection which cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, grooming, online safety, healthy sexual behaviour, neglect and negligent behaviour, self-harm, staying safe away from home, radicalisation, commercial exploitation and disclosing abuse. These programmes should be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas.

The United Nations Charter on the [Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) clearly indicates the right of all children to grow up in a safe and secure environment.

The World Health Organisation also highlights the prevalence and dangers of child abuse for all children (anyone under the age of 18) in this [WHO child abuse fact sheet](#) .

TBSC recognises the importance of providing and maintaining safe educational and social environments where children learn, develop and flourish. Staff are expected to promote a positive learning environment with a focus on developing and maintaining positive relationships with the students under their care. All TBSC staff are trained to notice and respond to concerns in order to protect each individual student. All members of the school community should be aware of, and accept their responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our students. Safeguarding is part of the culture of the TBSC community and is a responsibility of all members of that community.

This policy explains the school's safeguarding and child protection policies, associated protocols and expectations of conduct for all members of the TBSC community. It explains how TBSC staff, parents and board members are expected to identify and respond to instances where children are mistreated, neglected or abused by adults whether it occurs on the school site or elsewhere. Abuse may be physical or emotional or based on attitudes of prejudice. This policy and the protocols are shared with the community and are subject to annual review.

The school understands that for some staff this policy and related training sessions may trigger personal discomfort or an emotional response. If any member of staff would like personal support they should contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer, in confidence, who will make the appropriate arrangements.

All TBSC staff receive appropriate child protection training which is updated annually, either through Educare or other recognised providers.

Guidance

This policy is based on the latest research and guidance from UK regulatory authorities and international best practice:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023– DfE](#)
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (DfE, 2018)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (DfE, 2018)
- [Promoting positive emotional well-being and reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching on-line safety in schools \(DfE, 2019\)](#)

Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

[Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2023](#) describes abuse in the following way:

'Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.'

Keeping Children Safe in Education refers to four categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

All staff at TBSC are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding). We understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely 'stand-alone' events and that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap. We maintain a position that **'it could happen here'**.

In addition, staff are aware of other types of abuse and safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and understand that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. The definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from the Department of Education (DfE, 2017) has been adopted:

"Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The Lead Safeguarding Officer will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

Children missing from education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. TBSC recognises that a child missing education without verifiable parental authorisation, (an email from the TBSC family account or short phone call) is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents to keep children in school whenever possible.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family, or be placing a child at risk of harm.

Mental health

Our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies and professionals as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resilience. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

Online safety

[Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2023](#) describes the responsibility placed upon schools to have robust systems safeguard the students in its care in this areas:

'It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene, in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.'

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

To help ensure that we have the most up to date filtering and monitoring systems in place, we have a member of our ICT team who is responsible for:

- Reviewing filtering and monitoring annually
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting on teaching and learning
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place

The three main areas of online risk could be categorised as:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising seeking to unduly influence children as well as adults posing as children or young adults;
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Our school recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of child on child sexual violence or harassment will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures. We will seek advice and support from other agencies as appropriate.

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways and can and can occur between children of any age and sex . This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence / sexual harassment, 'up-skirting', 'sexting' or initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.

Serious violence

All staff are aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, a manipulative individual, or individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Children potentially at risk of greater harm

We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be children requiring mental health support or those special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities who may face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability/SEN status, without further exploration

- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Procedure for Staff Reporting Concerns

[TBSC Safeguarding Concerns Reporting Sheet](#) - This must be PRINTED OFF and handed to a DSO.

If a student or another member of the community makes a disclosure or raises a concern, the staff member should:

- Be welcoming even if the time is not convenient for you.
- Try to have the conversation in a quiet place where your conversation will not be interrupted.
- Stay calm and listen carefully. Do not express shock, anger, distaste or other negative emotions but try to reassure them and empathise.
- Make accurate notes using the individual's own words as much as possible and your responses.
- Allow them to tell you at their own pace. Do not ask leading questions but you may ask for clarification. Do not ask them for names or make comments about the possible abuser.
- Communicate in a way that is appropriate for their age and their ability to understand your language.
- Reassure them. Tell them you are sorry this has happened and that you will do all you can to help them. If emergency help is required do not delay getting it. Explain you will be talking to someone who will be able to help them. Reassure them again!
- **Do not investigate or promise confidentiality** but reassure them they will be supported and that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not attempt to guess or draw information out of the student. Allow them to speak.
- Print off and fill in a hard copy [TBSC Safeguarding Report Sheet](#) by hand at the end of the conversation and take it to a Designated Safeguarding Officer as a matter of urgency.
- Record that you have completed a form on ISAMS Wellbeing Manager eg. 'Please see the completed' Safeguarding Report sheet'.

If a member of staff sees an incident or observes evidence of behaviour or changes in behaviour in a child which may indicate a cause for concern, they should fill in the TBSC Safeguarding Report Sheet with their concerns and any appropriate evidence and submit it to a DSO or the LSO.

In any situation where a referral has been made to a Designated Safeguarding Officer, members of staff should continue to monitor the child in their classroom to look for any signs that the situation may be deteriorating and report accordingly. **They will not, however, intervene directly.** The Designated Safeguarding Officers will try to provide feedback to the report if possible but, remember, the priority is to protect the wellbeing of the child, and confidentiality is often central to this.

The completed TBSC Safeguarding Report Sheet will be kept on a central confidential file by the school and will be shared within the Safeguarding team and, where appropriate, external. Safeguarding files are kept with the school counsellor and can only be accessed by her and the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Any concerns regarding a member of staff, a parent at home or any other adult on site must be made directly to the Lead Safeguarding Officer. If the concern relates to him, contact the Board Safeguarding Officer. You are passing on information and not making an allegation. The information will be fully investigated. The school is committed to whistleblowers protection.

TBSC Safeguarding Team and Responsibilities [\(Link\)](#)

Head of School: George Palmer (Lead Safeguarding Officer)

Head of Secondary: Gary Willis (DSO)

Head of Primary: Simon Rumsey (DSO)

Whole school Pastoral Coordinator: Becky Nicholls (DSO)

Upper Primary Coordinator: Kerstin Poole (DSO)

KS3 Coordinator: Patricia Marcano (DSO)

IB Coordinator: Stephanie Mitchell (DSO)

School Counselor: Ms Patricia Simancas (on site 8-12 Monday, Tuesday & Thursday)

School Nurse: Edwina Wilkinson

Board Safeguarding Lead: Maria Eugenia Salazar

1. To ensure the wellbeing of the student is paramount, including assessing the level of risk to the individual.
2. Any reported instances will be discussed with the appropriate parties and be followed up. The Lead Safeguarding Officer will consider all parties involved in the incident or concern reported and discuss possible responses only as widely as necessary,
3. Any reports to outside agencies or people will only be done after consultation with the Head of School.
4. The Safeguarding team will retain confidentiality.
5. Staff who reported the incident will receive some feedback within 72 hours from a Designated Safeguarding Officer they reported to, but this feedback may only be to continue monitoring and reporting any further instances or concerns.
6. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will not act in isolation and all proposed actions will be discussed with the safeguarding team.

More information can be seen on the Safeguarding Team job description link [here](#)

Safer Recruitment

The School recognises the vital role it plays in appointing staff who are suited to work with young people and have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment, ensuring that all staff, including new staff, are not a threat to the wellbeing of our students. Job applicants will be asked relevant questions to establish whether they have the physical, emotional and mental capacity for the specific role they have applied for, as well as their awareness of the *basic* aims, principles and procedures that characterise safeguarding.

When appointing new staff the school will:

- Verify a candidate's identity and character from personal documentation and thorough background checks with current and past employers, including comprehensive, written references and follow-up by phone
- Obtain a certificate for a criminal record check with a barred list information or equivalent.
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Require all new staff to undertake an induction programme which covers their role and safeguarding responsibilities(including completing an Educare course on Child Protection in International Schools) and expectations. This will be followed by a two week observation period to ensure their classroom's are safe places for students as part of their probationary period.
- sign the TBSC Code of Conduct ([TBSC Staff Code of Conduct](#))
- Expect staff to report concerns safe in the knowledge the school will protect whistleblower confidentiality and job security.

Outside Providers: The role of Administration

Below are some safeguarding guidelines for contractors, vendors and visitors to ensure they are adhering to the school's policies and procedures.

On arrival at school and for any subsequent visits, contractors, vendors or visitors:

- Must identify at reception and wear the corresponding badge at all times. Contractor and visitor badges will identify your activity during visit.
- Must act in a professional manner at all times.
- Under no circumstances are photographs or video of the children taken on any type of device.
- Be mindful of your language when working in earshot of the pupils.
- Only adults who have been police checked and have undergone safeguarding training (including Educare) can work with students alone
- Liability insurance is required for contractors working in school premises, the policy must meet established requirements.
- All contractor activity must take place outside school hours.
- Contractors performing tasks during school hours, must be accompanied by staff or a member of the security team.

Related Policies:

Whistleblowing

School Trips and Educational Visits

Staff Code of Conduct

Social Media Policy

Approved SLT: October 2023

Board: November 2022

Review Date: November 2023