



ST. GEORGE
MADRID



International
Schools
Partnership

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

 ST. GEORGE MADRID	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	<i>Last update: December 2024</i> <i>Last Updated by: Paul Crouch (Head of School)</i> <i>Next review date: June 2027</i> <i>updated: 07.06.26</i>
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At St. George, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all staff to share this commitment. In line with this, we expect them to recognise where a student is at risk of, or is actually being harmed, and to do all they can to reduce further risk or harm.

We adhere to the following basic child protection and safeguarding principles:

A child's welfare is paramount, and each student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded irrespective of race, religion, ability, gender, or culture.

All students need to be safe and feel safe in school.

Every student is entitled to a rich and broad curriculum that helps to equip them to keep themselves safe.

Every adult in school must have a demonstrable commitment to protecting the students with/for whom we work.

We work in partnership with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure the protection of students.

Our guiding principle throughout is 'the best interests of the students'.

All students have the same equal rights to protection, but we recognise that we need to do more for some because of their additional learning needs, disability, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

Policy Aims and Objectives

We will:

Provide a safe and happy environment to enable students to thrive and learn. Outline the systems and processes we all take to ensure that students remain safe at school.

Raise awareness to all employees of safeguarding/child protection issues and define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse.

Identify students who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

Ensure effective communication between all employees on child protection/safeguarding issues.

Set effective procedures for employees/volunteers or third-party individuals who encounter any issues in relation to child protection/safeguarding to follow.

Be clear with all parties, including students and their parents/carers, regarding our approach to safeguarding and child protection, through the provision of clear and well communicated policies.

Definitions

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the processes of protecting students from harm, preventing the impairment of their health and development, ensuring that we seek to improve the general health and well-being of all students in our care and enabling every student to have the optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Child Protection

Child Protection is the core element of safeguarding and is defined as the responsibility to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer from harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Note:

If the preventative work around safeguarding issues is not appropriate or extensive enough, students identified as being a concern may move to being identified as being at risk of significant harm. Although other factors outside of the school's control may also influence this, the purpose of the policy is to ensure that at St. George, we take whatever measures are possible to avoid this from happening.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team:

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that this policy is implemented across school and followed by all staff and volunteers.

- Allocate sufficient time and resources to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to carry out their role effectively. Ensure that the culture of the school facilitates concerns being raised and handled sensitively.

- Ensure that safeguarding is addressed through the curriculum ensuring that children throughout the school are taught about keeping themselves safe, including online safety.
- Ensure the school site is secure.

- Only deploy staff who will have unsupervised contact with children, where safe recruitment procedures have been followed.

- Maintain a record of all training undertaken by staff in relation to safeguarding and child

protection. This training record should be made available for inspection during any audit and should reflect the timescales for renewal identified in this policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) in a school

At St. George, there is a named person designated as the Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to support the Headteacher. This person/people will: receive appropriate safeguarding training to equip them to undertake their role, be given sufficient time in the working day to undertake the role and be able to prioritise safeguarding when necessary.

The DSL role is guided by two principles:

The welfare of the child is always paramount.

Confidentiality should be respected as far as is reasonably possible.

Being guided by these principles the Designated Safeguarding Lead will: Play a key role in ensuring that the school takes action to support any student who may be at risk.

With the Headteacher, make sure that all employees, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Have appropriate training in addition to the basic training that all other staff receive. This includes attending ISP Designated Safeguarding Lead training at least every two years and actively participating in their DSL Regional Networking meetings to ensure they stay updated on safeguarding issues.

Collate and keep accurate and confidential records of any concerns about children, this should include ensuring robust action plans are implemented at the earliest opportunity which are captured in writing and are reviewed regularly.

Have a clear understanding of the local expectations around safeguarding, who to contact, what agencies exist and how to contact them.

Ensure that the entire school community knows who the DSL/ DSL Team is in their setting.

Be familiar with local regulations, procedures and agencies who can offer support for safeguarding matters.

All staff have the responsibility to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility is to make decisions about what to do next and then to take appropriate action.

All staff (including staff of partner organisations and contractors having unsupervised contact with children)

All staff will:

Ensure they are familiar with and follow the policy and all other safeguarding related documents.

Be subject to safer recruitment processes and checks prior to starting at the school/organisation (unless an action plan/risk assessment is in place to ensure the employee is supervised until all checks are completed, this must be authorised by the Group Health and Safety Director before

employment begins).

Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.

Listen to and take seriously the views and concerns of children, knowing what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.

Know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) and children's social care in their area. Employees should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

Be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Record any concerns and report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the school's concern form.

Be aware of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in the school they are working in and how they can be contacted.

Follow the procedures outlined in this document when/if concerned about any child. Support students, employees or other adults who have concerns, or who are the subject of concerns, to act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation.

Undertake appropriate child protection/safeguarding and safe recruitment training (and refresher training as required by ISP).

All staff and volunteers need to recognise that if their behaviour inside or outside the workplace breaches the conduct set out in this policy and/or the guidance for safe working practice, this may be considered a disciplinary or even criminal matter.

All staff who have occasional or supervised contact with children will: undergo a safeguarding briefing/induction in relation to their role, understand what is required of them if they have concerns and to whom they should report.

Provide written confirmation to demonstrate that where appropriate, all partner agency staff/contractors have been safely recruited with appropriate checks undertaken and that a safeguarding briefing has been provided to these employees, (appropriate to the role and contact they will have with children), before they commence their role in school. Where partners/contractors do not have their own safeguarding or child protection policy, the school policy will be used, and partners/contractors asked to read and follow this. These requirements will be part of any contractual arrangement.

Follow the guidance laid down in this document at all times.

Be provided with guidance on appropriate safe working practice.

Training and support

All staff, volunteers and partner agencies in schools are provided with appropriate general

safeguarding training on joining the organisation and then undertake annual refreshers.

Staff and volunteers are supported and have the necessary skills to recognise and take appropriate action regarding students who are at risk, or potentially at risk. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has appropriate, up to date knowledge and access appropriate additional and specialist training. This will be refreshed every two years.

All staff and volunteers are subject to a full induction, which includes an overview of what to do and who to contact if concerned about a student. Training for new starters must be complete before any new starter can have unsupervised contact with students.

Any student who has or is suffering from any form of harm will receive support. Once agreed with any investigating agency (if involved), students can be offered direct support through school counsellors or external agency input. All staff, unless specifically asked to do so, must never carry out an investigation about any suspected abuse. This can be highly specialist work and could interfere with a criminal investigation if this were required and appropriate under local laws. All staff are entitled to support if affected by a safeguarding issue.

Forms of abuse

There are a significant number of ways that students may be exposed to risk and danger. All require a response. Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. This can manifest itself as direct harm to a child, or by a failure to take action to protect a child who is at risk of, or already suffering harm. The more commonly referred to types of abuse are:

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Sexual Abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This form of abuse can involve direct contact activities but also non-contact activities over social media or the internet.

Neglect: This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

While the above are the broad four main areas of potential abuse, abuse itself can take many forms involving one or more of these areas. All staff need to be aware of what to look for and what actions to take when concerned about any of these issues (or any other concerns).

Specific Safeguarding Issues

There are specific safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm (listed below). All staff must be aware of the signs and indicators of these specific issues to enable early intervention support to be put in place within schools or referrals made to specialist outside agencies.

Peer on Peer abuse

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Where an allegation is made that one child may have abused another, this will always be taken seriously and dealt with as a safeguarding matter. This type of peer-on-peer behaviour will not be tolerated. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Peer on Peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment;
- non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and/or videos (sexting) causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

This can occur between two children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap. They can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. All employees must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Any report of peer-on-peer abuse should be taken seriously. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

All employees should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and,
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked, or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages. Sexting may also be referred to by students as trading nudes, dirties or pic for pic. There are many reasons why a student may want to send a naked or semi-naked picture, video, or message to someone else:

They may find it difficult to say no if somebody asks them for an explicit image, especially if the person asking is persistent or has groomed the child to gain their trust. ▪ Joining in because they think that 'everyone is doing it'.

Boosting their self-esteem.

Flirting with others and testing their sexual identity.

Exploring their sexual feelings.

^To get attention and connect with new people on social media.

Students often do not realise that in creating and sending these images they are potentially committing a criminal act. Ideally, we would not want to deal with these issues as criminal acts. Learning and support can be a more beneficial way of tackling sexting. Staff must report any incident of sexting to the DSL on the school concern form.

Mental Health

We 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. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. School staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a member of staff has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by capturing the concern on the school's concern form and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

Self-Harm

Self-harm can take a number of physical and/or emotional forms. There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. Once they start, it can become a compulsion. Self-harm is not usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it is often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions and a way of coping. So, whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously.

The exact reasons why children and young people decide to hurt themselves are not always easy to work out. In fact, they might not even know exactly why they do it, but there are links between depression and self-harm. Quite often a child or young person who is self-harming is being bullied, under too much pressure, being emotionally abused, grieving, or having relationship problems with family or friends. The feelings that these issues bring up can include low self esteem, low confidence, loneliness, sadness, anger, numbness, and lack of control in their lives. Young people will sometimes go to great lengths to cover self-harm scars or injuries and/or they will explain any indications of

self-harm as accidents.

There are some common themes that may help staff identify concerns including: Physical indicators such as cuts, bruises, burns, bald patches (where hair has been pulled out).

Emotional indicators such as depression, sudden weight loss, drinking or drug-taking, or unusual eating habits and isolation or withdrawal.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is self-harming, this must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will consider the next steps.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

At St. George, we value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or leads to violence and harm of others, goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Any freedom of speech which promotes violence against anyone or anything else will not be tolerated.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with through the procedures set out in this document. Any concerns and signs of FGM must be reported to the DSL.

Forced marriages (FM)

A Forced marriage (FM) is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g., threats, physical violence, or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g., if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent. In 2013, the first United Nations Human Rights Council also adopted a resolution against child and forced marriages. This resolution recognises child, early, and forced marriage as involving violations of human rights which "prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and has adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education."

As with FGM and some other cultural practices, we need to be aware of the cultural sensitivities but always act in the students' best interests. However, the school procedures must be followed in the same way as for any other safeguarding or child protection matter.

Children missing from education

All employees should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign for any form of safeguarding issue highlighted in this policy. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. All staff should be aware of the St. George attendance policy and inform the DSL if they have a specific concern over a child.

Domestic Abuse

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Fabricated and Induced illness

In fabricated illness, the perpetrator (usually a parent or carer) does not directly harm the child but reports to doctors a clinical story which is eventually established to be fabricated. Whereas with induced illness the perpetrator inflicts direct (hands on) harm to the child. This can range from trivial injuries such as pricking the child to add blood to urine, through to suffocation. All schools must have a robust attendance policy to aid the monitoring of child illnesses. When a parent reports that a child has an illness which requires a health plan the school must work in collaboration with the medical practitioner treating the child.

Note:

The above is not an exhaustive list of all the potential forms of abuse which employees may have to deal with on occasions. For information, please see "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2021. This is a UK publication, but the types of abuse discussed are valid and can apply to any country around the world. All employees are required to read and acknowledge receipt of Part 1 of the document.

Preventative measures and linked policies for safeguarding children There are a number of policies linked to this overall safeguarding policy. These are:

E-safety
Anti-Bullying
Physical Intervention/Restraint
Safer Recruitment
Intimate Care
Whistleblowing

Mobile phone and Camera Images

It is our policy that practitioners, teachers, and visitors to our school should not use personal mobile phones to take images of children. If personal equipment is used to capture child images, these images should be uploaded to the school system as soon as possible and immediately deleted from personal equipment. These measures must be completed before the member of staff leaves the school premises at the end of a school day. Permission to capture images, videos or audio recordings should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Principal for the school.

At the beginning of school events parents should be reminded of the restriction of taking photos and videos on school site and that they must not take images of any child other than their own.

Publication of school activities on digital platforms

We are aware that the use of digital platforms and social media in particular can make children particularly vulnerable to 'grooming'. Therefore, all staff will ensure that when promoting school activity on these platforms they adhere to the following measures:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image.

- always explaining what images will be used for and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children.

- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published.

- Never showing screen shots of video conferencing lessons or meetings that show children's faces and full names.

- only using images of children in appropriate clothing.

- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming

- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information.

- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information).

- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by using correct settings on digital platforms.

Photographs for School publications and marketing

Photographs of students being used by staff for marketing are only taken on school cameras/devices.

Images should be saved on a secure server/database and printed copies only used within the school for purposes such as displays, records and learning journals. Images to be used for marketing need to be agreed with parents/carers before use.

Visitors and parents/carers should be asked not to use mobile devices within the school and/or early years setting, except where permission has been granted to capture images of their own child or children. All parents/carers must give permission for photographs to be used for publicity purposes and to sign a disclaimer if they do not wish their child's image to be used externally.

Failure of employees to adhere to the above measures to safeguard the children in our care will result in disciplinary action.

Children with Additional Learning Needs or Disabilities

All staff should recognise that children with Additional Learning Needs and Disabilities can mean additional safeguarding challenges. Depending on the nature of a child's learning need or disability, additional barriers can exist which make it more difficult to identify and recognise signs of abuse. It should also be recognised that children with disabilities may be disproportionately impacted on by behaviours such as bullying but they may not show any outward signs. Communication difficulties can make it very difficult for a child to indicate what's happening and, therefore, may make it very difficult to overcome any such barrier. Staff should be extra vigilant and report all concerns, avoiding making assumptions about the causes of any injury or behaviour.

Procedures

Adults concerned about a Student

If a member of staff suspects that any student in their care may be a victim of abuse or is at risk of abuse or other form of harm, they should not try to investigate, and instead should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) about their concerns as soon as possible.

Staff must disclose any concerns they have about the possibility of a student being abused or placing themselves at risk. It is better to share these concerns, which may later prove to be unfounded, than to hold onto information that may have helped protect a student from actual harm. In many cases a student will not make a direct disclosure, but employees will be concerned because of a physical or emotional indicator. In these circumstances, employees should still use the record of concern form online to make a report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where any student makes any form of direct disclosure, the guidelines under the heading

'Dealing with Disclosure' below should be followed.

Disclosure, Reporting and Further Action

If a child asks to speak to someone in confidence about a problem, no one should ever promise confidentiality if what the child discloses or is likely to disclose relates to abuse being suffered by them or another child. Staff should always give this as a health warning before meeting with the child.

The following guidance is based on five key practices for all staff:

Receive

Where possible, always stop and listen to a child who wishes to speak in confidence. We know that children will often find the most inconvenient time to do this, but it is important that you make time for the child, even if this is to say, "I can't stop now but come and see me in my office at...". Where possible during any disclosure try to listen, allow silences, and try not to show shock or disbelief.

Reassure

Try to stay calm, make no judgements and empathise with the child. Never make a promise you can't keep. Give as much reassurance as you can and tell the child what your actions are going to be. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing by telling you.

React

React to what the child is saying only in as far as you need to for further information. Don't ask leading questions. Keep questions open such as... "is there anything else you need to tell me?". Try not to criticise the alleged perpetrator as this may be a family member for whom the child may still have feelings.

Report

Where a child makes any disclosure, or where you have concerns for any reason, it is very important that the procedures outlined in this document are followed. A full written/typed account of the concern (ideally using the record of concern form online) should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and should include, where relevant, a completed body map.

Where a child has made a disclosure and alleges abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Principal / Head of School in the absence of the DSL), should be informed as soon as possible. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will collate any available evidence by ensuring the notes taken from any witnesses are made available to any investigating body. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then consider and where necessary, consult on the information available. It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make decisions about what action to take next and to make the decision whether to take the matter further within the local legal framework. It is important that

a full record of all the information and decisions made are recorded and stored confidentially.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Record Keeping

All records of child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations should be treated as sensitive information and are kept together securely and separately from the child's general school records. The information should be shared with all those who need to have it, whether to enable them to take appropriate steps to safeguard the child, or to enable them to carry out their own duties, but it should not be shared more widely than that.

Confidentiality

Schools should regard all information relating to individual Safeguarding/child protection issues as confidential and should treat it accordingly. Information should be passed on to appropriate persons only at the discretion of the Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead and this should always be based on the need to know.

All records relating to child protection should be secured appropriately.

Appendix

DSL Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Melody Sunman**

Contact email: **m.sunman@stgeorgemadrid.com**

Deputy DSLs: **Emma McLaughlin, Lucy Stuart-Menteth**, Contact emails:
e.mclaughlin@stgeorgemadrid.com, l.stuartmenteth@stgeorgemadrid.com

Contact telephone (for all): **916 50 84 40**

Local referrals and support

Local safeguarding agency:

Local safeguarding advice: