

## POLICY 7600

# BBIS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Berlin Brandenburg International School (BBIS) strives to create an environment in which its students are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. BBIS recognizes its ethical and statutory responsibility (German law, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Task Force on Child Protection) to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its children. The care and safety of our students is always paramount and is the responsibility of the whole community.

BBIS aim is to create an environment whereby:

- Children's safety and well-being is paramount and our most important consideration
- We protect children from any form of abuse
- We are alert to the signs of abuse both in school and from outside
- We deal appropriately and sensitively with every suspicion or disclosure of abuse
- We establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach

The policy has 13 main elements plus two appendices:

1. The structure and responsibility of the Child Protection and Safeguarding (CPS) Team
2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Team Contacts 2020-21
3. Recruitment and employment
4. Staff training and responsibilities
5. Preventing abuse by means of good practice
6. Types of Abuse; Responding and reporting suspicions of abuse
7. Record keeping
8. Working within the context of German law
9. Supporting families
10. Allegations against staff
11. Peer-on-Peer Abuse
12. Confidentiality
13. Residential Accommodation
14. Appendix A: Responding to a Disclosure
15. Appendix B: Continuous Learning - Staff Safeguarding Expectations and Requirements

Two Child Protection and Safeguarding Officers (CPSO) are appointed and two CPS Teams have been established to serve our community; one for Primary School and one for Secondary School. The Secondary School CPS Team is responsible for the Boarding School. Each CPS Core Team consists of the CPS Chair (Head of Student Support Services), the relevant division CPS Officer and a School Health Advisor. The extended CPS Team includes the relevant division principal, school counsellor and school director, if needed. The team will include a competent German speaker.

The CPS Team is responsible for managing and overseeing all CPS referrals, documentation, action plans and liaising with the necessary external agencies, when appropriate.

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING TEAM CONTACTS 2020-21

- Secondary CPO – Chris Kelly, Room 2418 x259 [christopher.kelly@bbis.de](mailto:christopher.kelly@bbis.de)
- Primary CPO – Kerrigan James, Room 1332 x261 [kerrigan.james@bbis.de](mailto:kerrigan.james@bbis.de)
- CPS Team Chair – Jonathan Matthews-Hirsch, Room 3116 x124 [jonathan.matthews-hirsch@bbis.de](mailto:jonathan.matthews-hirsch@bbis.de)

#### RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

All applicants for work within the school, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked about their suitability to work with students and must provide at least three confidential professional references. One or more of the confidential references will be a direct supervisor of the candidate (minimally at the Assistant Principal level or equivalent). At least two of the confidential references will be secured from the last two positions the candidate held during the past 6 years, with one or more of the references supplied by an assistant principal or principal. The most recent of the supervisory references will be contacted directly, either through technology (e.g. telephone, Skype, etc.) or face-to-face and, noted. From all three referees, a request to confirm in writing that, *"I neither know nor suspect any reason why [teacher's name] should not have substantial unsupervised access to children"* will be sought.

Candidates must provide evidence of identity and qualifications. A police clearance (Polizeiliches Führungszeugnis) will be required of all applicants and employees and will need to be renewed every three years. In case applicants have unexplained gaps in their employment history, or have moved frequently from one job to another, explanations will be sought. All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the school administration is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with students.

## STAFF TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BBIS will seek out ongoing training opportunities for all adults involved in the school to ensure that they are aware of all symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. CPS training opportunities will be provided annually, either internally or externally, during the August in-service week. Relevant briefings and an overview will be provided to staff or volunteers joining mid-year.

Every employee and trustee of the school as well as every volunteer who assists the school are under a general legal duty:

- To protect children from abuse and safeguard their well-being.
- To be aware of the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures and to follow them.
- To sign in acknowledgement that they have read the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- To actively receive initial and ongoing CPS training.
- To know how to follow and implement the procedures.
- To report any matters of concern to the CPS team in a timely manner (normally within 24 hours of a disclosure).
- To maintain only professional working relationships with students (regardless of age) and will actively avoid giving the impression of an inappropriate relationship, see below.

Please also see 'Appendix A – Responding to a Disclosure' for further guidance

## PREVENTING ABUSE BY MEANS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The CPS policy and the "Students First - CPS Guidelines - A Staff Code of Conduct for Protective Practices" will be distributed to all staff who will be required to sign to confirm that they both understand and accept their professional obligation in reporting CPS concerns and that they will be expected to operate within appropriate professional boundaries, especially when students are in their care.

Students will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence with adult support, through the PSHE, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula, in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable students to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

Please also see 'Appendix B: Continuous Learning - Staff Safeguarding Expectations and Requirements'

**Responding and Reporting Suspicions of Abuse**  
**Types and Signs of Abuse (NSPCC UK website)**

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes:

- hitting with hands or objects;
- slapping and punching; kicking;
- shaking and/or throwing;
- poisoning;
- burning and scalding;
- biting and scratching;
- breaking bones;
- drowning.

It is important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls. And there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for. But it's important to be aware of the signs. If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Physical abuse symptoms include: bruises; broken or fractured bones; burns or scalds; bite marks. It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as: scarring; the effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures; breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Emotional abuse includes:

- humiliating or constantly criticizing a child;
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names;
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child;
- blaming and scapegoating;
- making a child perform degrading acts;
- not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives;
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations;

- exposing a child to upsetting events or situations, like domestic abuse or drug taking;
- failing to promote a child's social development;
- not allowing them to have friends;
- persistently ignoring them;
- being absent;
- manipulating a child;
- never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes; never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. And a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting. As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance;
- struggle to control their emotions;
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships; act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong and goes against accepted standards. They might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It can be committed by adults or other children.

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Some of the signs you might notice include:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know;
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know;
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting;
- Alcohol or drug misuse;
- Self-harm;
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.

Physical signs might include:

- Bruises;
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area;
- Sexually transmitted infections;

- Pregnancy.

## NEGLECT

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's most basic needs for love, shelter, education, healthcare, hygiene and supervision. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. Broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect.

- **Physical neglect**  
A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect**  
A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- **Emotional neglect**  
A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect**  
A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have: Poor appearance and hygiene; health and development problems; housing and family issues; significant changes in mood or behaviour.

### Responding and Reporting

Reported suspicions, disclosure and/or change in student's behaviour/appearance will be recorded on a CPS Referral Form and reported to the CPS Team for review.

The CPS Team will, in the vast majority of cases, be the first point of reference for any concerns. Concerns will be referred in writing to a CPS Officer or in the officer's absence the CPS Chair using the CPS Referral Form. This must be done within 24 hours. Email or other electronic media must not be used for reasons of data protection. An exception to this would occur when acute and imminent concerns for student safety arise and where immediate steps must be taken. Under these conditions, the reporting member of staff must remain with the student until an appropriate professional (School Counsellor, CPS Officer or Principal) assumes responsibility for the child or young person.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept strictly confidential, shared only with those who need to know and where applicable, including external agencies.

## RECORD KEEPING

CPS Referral Forms will be kept separate from the usual ongoing academic records of progress and development. Whenever a CPS referral form is completed, the record will include: the name, address and age of the child; timed and dated observations describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance without comment or interpretation; the dated name and signature of the recorder. In the case of a direct disclosure the exact words spoken by the child will also be included.

The CPS Referral Forms will be securely kept in a separate CPS file and will not be accessible to staff in the school other than the CPS Core Team members and, only in case of imminent danger, the director. Where appropriate student records will be forwarded to future schools given data protection and local jurisdiction considerations at the discretion of the CPS Core Team. CPS Referral forms and subsequent records will be kept for a minimum of 10 years beyond the age of majority (18 years old) for students and 10 years beyond leaving BBIS for staff.

### **Working within the Context of German Law - Contact with other Organizations**

BBIS cooperates within the Potsdam Mittelmark CPS Network Agreement and our designated external CPS Expert/Kinderschutzfachkraft is the EJF e.V. in Teltow (See CPS Appendices 3). BBIS is able to seek anonymous and impartial advice, where concerns arise.

BBIS operates in accordance with German law and best practice both locally and within the international school community. On direct instruction from our designated external CPS Expert/Kinderschutzfachkraft, school concerns and confidential records will be shared with the appropriate authorities, such as the district children's and young people's welfare office (Jugendamt). In the case of acute concerns for student safety, the school will contact the necessary authorities (Police and or Jugendamt) directly.

If a report on a student is to be made to the authorities, the student's parents will only be informed at the same time the report is made if the authorities recommend this step.

The school will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority, including names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual caseworkers, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency, for the school and the local authorities to work well together. Records will be kept of local CPS support agencies or other contacts, as appropriate.

## SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

BBIS will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the school. Where abuse at home is suspected, BBIS will continue to welcome the student and family while investigations proceed. With the proviso that the care and safety of the student must always be paramount, BBIS will do all in its power to support and work with the student's family.

### **Allegations against BBIS Staff**

The school has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff from false or unfounded allegations. Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupil/s concerned; and
- the need for a fair procedure in order to determine the facts behind the allegation(s) and create a relevant and appropriate response.

Guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place children or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a child.

## PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

We define peer-on-peer abuse as any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non- intimate), friendships and wider peer associations. Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to): serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence and abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence. Examples of online peer-on-peer abuse would include sexting, online abuse, peer-on-peer grooming, the distribution of youth involved sexualised content, and harassment.

When an allegation is made of inappropriate behaviours carried out by a student, the school must act in a way that safeguards both students involved.

Further details can be found in the BBIS Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy – details below

### Confidentiality

On employment, all staff members and volunteers have signed a confidentiality agreement. This is necessary as staff may be privy to confidential information regarding a student in order to undertake their responsibilities. If an adult who works with a child is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from their Principal. However, if such information is pertaining to a CPS disclosure or concern then guidance *only* from the CPS Team would be the appropriate course of action.

### Residential Accommodation

Further specific guidelines relate to the Boarding School and the unique nature of that environment. Further details can be found in the Boarding Policies and Procedures Document – see below.



### **Related Policies and Guidelines**

BBIS Staff Code of Conduct – under review 2020-21

BBIS Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy – in process 2020-21

BBIS Boarding Policies and Procedures Document – in process 2020-21

### **Bibliography**

International School of Prague – Child Protection Policy, online, [https://www.isp.cz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HR-Child-Protection-Policy\\_20160206.doc-1.pdf](https://www.isp.cz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HR-Child-Protection-Policy_20160206.doc-1.pdf)

Hillel Academy: Child Protection Policy, pdf, 27 May 2019

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), online, [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

## APPENDIX A – RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

### Do's and Don't for Dealing with CPS Disclosures Universal Needs of Victims

- Emotional support
- A non-judgmental reaction to the disclosure
- To feel validated
- Feel safe
- Get help in solving the physical and emotional problems related to the victimization.
- All helping efforts should be geared toward providing the child or adolescent an opportunity to regain control in his/her life.

The following guidelines are important to consider in order to facilitate the helping process in a sensitive, supportive and nonjudgmental manner:

#### When Talking with the Child **DO**...

- ☒ Make sure the educator is someone the child trusts (*Remember TED: Tell me, explain to me, describe to me, so as not to ask leading questions*)
- ☒ Make sure the educator is the person in the school most competent to talk with children.
- ☒ Conduct the discussion in private.
- ☒ Sit next to the child, not across the table.
- ☒ Conduct the talk in language the child understands.
- ☒ Inform the child if future action will be required.
- ☒ Write up careful notes afterwards of what was said, using professional language and actual words wherever possible.

#### When Talking with the Child **DON'T**...

- Allow the child to feel "in trouble" or at "fault."
- Promise to keep things confidential
- Display shock, anger, or disapproval of the parent(s) or situation.
- Place blame or make judgments about the parent(s) or child.
- Pry into family matters unrelated to the specific situation.
- Suggest answers to the child.
- Probe or press for answers the child is unwilling to give.
- Pressure or force the child to remove clothing.
- Conduct the discussion with a group of people.

#### What do I do if...?

- If you suspect a student is being abused, a student confides in you, someone has or makes a complaint about any adult or about you, it is your duty to **report** it immediately (within 24 hours) to an administrator or school counsellor.
- If you are concerned about a student's safety and wellbeing, or there is a concern, complaint or allegation about an adult or yourself, you should **report** it immediately (within 24 hours) to an administrator or school counsellor.

**DO NOT** investigate it yourself. Do not immediately inform the parents or carers.

You are legally mandated to report disclosures, allegations, complaints, suspicions and concerns to either the Child Protection Officers, Principal or School Counsellors.

#### APPENDIX B: BBIS CONTINUOUS LEARNING - STAFF SAFEGUARDING EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

To ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures for both staff and students are adhered to during online learning experiences please follow these requirements and guidelines:

##### Use of Technology

- Only use school approved online learning tools and platforms in order to interact with students.
- At no point should you give or use your personal email, social media or private phone numbers to the student. All communication should be via school email.
- Never give your Google login details to anyone else.
- Video conferencing should only ever involve a minimum of 3 people - an email exchange or phone call is a better response on an individual basis.
- 1:1 Adult/Student communication: If you need to talk to a student 1-2-1 remotely, please call home, talk to parents to explain why you need to talk (via email if based remotely or school telephone if in school) with the child, then follow up with an email to the parents and the student and outline the outcome of the conversation. Also inform your HoD and Principal

##### Conduct

- Whilst conducting online learning appropriate dress for both staff and students should be adhered to i.e. 'professional dress' for staff and *Policy 7500: Dress code* for students.
- Should a student appear inappropriately dressed immediately terminate the session and inform your principal of what has happened.
- Please consider your surroundings when joining a virtual session. Ideally, individuals should not be joining from their bedroom and school students should be located in a public space in their house within earshot of parents/guardians.

- Should a student or parent use language or behaviour that you deem inappropriate, offensive or abusive you should give a warning and then, if this persists, immediately terminate the session and inform your principal of what has happened.
- The extended leadership team will be given access to monitor sessions on an ad hoc basis.
- Please also refer to the *BBIS Student First - A Staff Code of Conduct for Protective Practices* document, for further general guidelines and expectations of staff.

#### Concerns

- If you have a concern about the safety and/or well-being of a child during school closure please...
  1. Contact Chris, Kerrigan or Jonathan MH in the first instance and within 24-hours
  2. The referral will be acknowledged and they will ask you via telephone for further details in order to complete the CPS referral form
  3. The extended CPS team will either meet virtually and/or in person to discuss the nature of the referral, urgency and next steps