



British School Quito

an Orbital Education School

<u>Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</u>
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The definition of safeguarding – children and young people

The school is committed to the values inherent in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990). At The British School Quito, we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interest of the child.

Our children have the right to protection from harm, harassment or abuse, regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, sexual orientation or social background. They have a right to be safe at all times, both in school and in their lives outside school.

In relation to children and young people, BSQ adopts the definition used in the Children Act 2004¹ and the UK Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2013, which defines safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare as:

- protecting children from maltreatment

¹UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

The Children Act 2004:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/part/2/crossheading/general

- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The above UK statutory guidance defines child protection as part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding children and child protection [guidance and legislation](#) applies to all children up to and including the age of 18.

Updates link found [here](#). Reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2021) 2020 and 2021 revisions – This guidance remains in force throughout the response to Covid-19. KSCIE comes into effect from 01st September 2021.

The School's responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection

All adults working at The British School Quito should be aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of every student, both physical and emotional, inside and outside school. This involves ensuring that pupils are protected from significant physical, sexual and/or emotional harm and that there is a positive commitment to ensure the satisfactory development and growth of the individual. Everyone working at BSQ should be fully committed to every aspect of the school's Child Protection Policy. All employees are required to report to the designated Child Protection Officer in the event that they suspect child abuse or neglect. All staff must know how to recognise possible abuse and should be familiar with the process of recording information in school and referral through the correct channels.

All staff at The British School Quito are required to complete an online training course in Child Protection through Educare. Upon successful completion of the course, a copy of the certificate must be placed in the staff member's HR file. In accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy, all staff will be required to provide a relevant Police Certificate when seeking employment or contract extension with the School.

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.
- Provide clear direction to staff and others about how to respond if concerned about a child or the behaviour of an adult.
- Ensure that Child Protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child
- Make clear our commitment to the development of good practice and procedure

Recognising child abuse?

Child abuse is 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. There are four main types of child abuse. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. It can also take the form of neglectful

behaviour towards a child. Other types of abuse exist and may but not always fall into these categories.

Physical abuse

This can range from over-chastisement, slapping with the hand, a belt, a stick or other object, to shaking, punching or throwing a child across the room. It can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or – at the extreme – death. Harm may be caused by the abuse itself and by abuse taking place in a wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression. It also includes a parent/carer fabricating symptoms of or inducing illness in a child. Some physical abuse is reactive and some may be clearly premeditated with an intent to cause harm. It can also take the form of an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.

Sexual abuse

Is the involvement of a child or adolescent in sexual activities that s/he does not understand, cannot give consent to and which are not acceptable by our society. This includes inappropriate touching, taking of obscene photographs, producing/trading in child pornography (including via the Internet) as well as attempted or actual sexual intercourse and 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. It can also take the form of an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence. Its adverse effects may endure into adulthood. Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development, even if they are in an intimate relationship. This form of abuse occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. It includes bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence, harassment, upskirting and sexting. It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim. Behaviour may be intimate or non-intimate.

Emotional abuse

This ranges from rejecting a child, refusing to show a child love or affection, or making a child unhappy by continually belittling her/him or verbally abusing her/him. It has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It may also include developmentally inappropriate expectations including overly high expectations which the child cannot fulfil. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse. Emotional abuse may occur by omission or commission and it is important the problems for a child's parents do not obscure professionals' view of their child's emotional development. Bullying – serious bullying causing a child to feel frightened or in danger may now be regarded as emotional abuse.

Neglect

This can range from ignoring a child's developmental needs to not feeding or clothing her/him adequately and not properly supervising her/him. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect may occur by omission or commission – it is important that problems for a child's parent do not obscure neglect of a child in the family.

Please refer back to the resources available as part of your Educare Online Child Protection course for more information and advice on signs of child abuse.

Peer on Peer abuse - please refer to separate policy document:

Peer on peer abuse may involve one or more of the above types of abuse, with specific awareness that that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse (as well as face to face).

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 such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse 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;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and seminude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- up skirting, 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; and
- 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).

All staff must be able to:

- Recognise the indicators of peer-on-peer abuse, know how to identify it, and respond to reports
- Recognise that peer-on-peer abuse may be taking place, even if not reported
- Understand their role in preventing it and responding to it if they believe a child may be at risk
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. If they do not, it can create an unsafe environment and lead to a culture that normalises abuse
- Abuse can take place inside and outside of school or online

Whole school approach to Peer-on-Peer Abuse

BSQ takes all allegations of peer-on-peer abuse extremely seriously. Staff are required to report any allegation of peer-on-peer abuse that is reported to them directly to the DSL, following the 'Reporting Abuse' structure detailed in this policy. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just

having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

BSQ recognizes that peer on peer abuse may be taking place within school, even if it is not reported. It is therefore important that all staff recognise the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and remain vigilant when around students.

Online safety and Peer on Peer Abuse

BSQ has an Online Safety Policy which is available to both staff (on Canvas) and Parents on the school website. It is important that we are all aware that peer on peer abuse can often take place using social media. Therefore, staff must adhere to the rules on mobile phone use in school which are stated in the Online Safety Policy and must bring to the attention of the DSL as well as the Head of School any unauthorised mobile phone use in school as soon as it occurs. If a student reports peer on peer abuse which is being conducted via social media but outside of school hours this will be dealt with as a safeguarding issue and parents will be informed. It is important that parents are aware of the risks of internet use and to facilitate this a copy of the school’s Online Safety Policy will be shared with parents at the beginning of the academic year.

Students reporting Peer on Peer Abuse

It is important that our students are aware of the support that is available if they are experiencing peer on peer abuse. As part of the PSHE programme and anti-bullying learning students should be made aware of what to do if they experience this, or any type, of abuse, they should also be aware of what constitutes peer on peer abuse and that BSQ operates a zero-tolerance policy towards this type of behaviour. In addition, BSQ staff will highlight peer on peer abuse and encourage students to report any behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are 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 wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal is responsible for the above aspects of child protection.

The Principal must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The Principal must do all that she can to ensure that all those working with children at BSQ school are suitable people. This involves scrutinizing applicants, after school instructors, and other agencies connected with the school by verifying their identity, obtaining references and obtaining comprehensive background checks. This involves CRB checks for all UK staff appointments and Police checks for Ecuadorian employees. All Board members are required to undergo suitable checks.

Ensure that training for the DSL is up to date and includes knowledge of local procedures. Training with Educare at L3 must be updated at least every two years. All staff to receive annual training regarding the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures. A record of attendance must be maintained and kept on file.

Responsibilities of the DSL

The DSL is responsible (with others) for training all staff at induction and with regular updates.

The DSL is responsible for reporting suspicions of child abuse directly to the Principal.

The DSL must ensure that all volunteers and contract staff undergo suitable checks.

The DSL must ensure that important parties such as the HoS, tutor and teachers are informed of any suspicions or allegations of abuse that have been made regarding a student.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that BSQ complies with all aspects of Ecuadorian law relating to the protection of children.

When an abuse is detected, the safeguarding team will meet and decide the next course of action. If necessary, the school Principal or their designated staff member will consult with the RHOS and then should contact DINAPEN and/or COMPINA. This will be done by contacting the office of DINAPEN and/or COMPINA and requesting that they come to the School. The school lawyer will be involved with checking the legality of the (anonymised) paperwork if appropriate. A record will be kept of that meeting by the DSL. Parental consent is not required for referral.

The DSL should keep a record with the documents that support the allegations of abuse, signed by the person who reported it. The DSL should also keep records of the follow up actions taken with the students after the incident was addressed by the school authorities, in terms of external support and School Counselling. These will be stored in a secure place, accessible by all member sof the safeguarding team.

The DSL will facilitate weekly discussions/meetings to update the safeguarding team on ongoing cases and also compile a monthly report on the status of all cases in that month, including ongoing cases from previous months.

Responsibilities of the Human Resources Coordinator:

It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Coordinator to keep up to date and accurate records of Police and CRB checks for all employees and that all employees have completed the relevant Educare *Child Protection in Education* course. All information is to be held on ISAMS.

APPLIES TO ALL SCHOOLS. At all times, reception staff and security personnel are required to be vigilant and adhere to the procedures governing the access, detailed record-keeping, provision of a Visitor's Pass to be worn for ease of identification and monitoring of visitors to the school. Reception and front of house staff must ensure that all visitors know and understand the expected behaviours towards our children by insisting that they read the information available.

Responsibilities of all BSQ employees

All BSQ staff must complete and regularly review the Educare *Child Protection in Education* online course. The certificate of completion of this course must be kept with the staff member's records by the Human Resources Department.

School Commitment - Recruitment, Training and Selection

The school safer recruitment procedures will be followed for all staff employed by the school. All staff (both teaching and non-teaching), including volunteers who apply to work at the school, will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process to ensure, as far as possible, their suitability to work with children and eligibility to work in British School Quito.

At least, two references will be taken up and they will be required to give evidence of their qualifications. References will be followed up and checked by the Principal or delegated member of staff. At least one person on an interviewing panel must have completed safer recruitment training. Staff will have access to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will be required to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents. All these policies are applicable when students go on trips away from school.

All employees are required to report to the designated Child Protection Officer in the event that they suspect child abuse or neglect. They do not need to wait for a child to make a disclosure, they should act on any concerns immediately. For example staff:

- May overhear a conversation that suggest a child may have been harmed or a child's behaviour may be an indicator
- May confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the appropriate person, if the report includes an online element
- Can ask children outright if they have been harmed and what the nature of the harm was

- Should keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- Should reflect back, using the child's language, when hearing a report
- Should recognise it may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse

If a child or young person tells you that they are being abused, it is important that you know how to respond.

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

- Be available and amenable;
- Listen carefully and at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell and that they will be supported and kept safe;
- Tell the child that you have to pass this information on;
- Make a careful, handwritten record of what was said;
- Avoid too many questions

You should NEVER:

- Take photographs or examine a child;
- Investigate a disclosure or allegation;
- Make promises to a child;
- Give the child the impression that they are creating a problem or be made to feel ashamed for making a report
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person;

You must report orally to the DSL immediately and as soon as possible complete a Safeguarding Referral Form (this is attached as an appendix) that should be handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL may involve other members of staff as required in an investigation. In the absence of the DSL, incidents must be reported to the Deputy DSL.

Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer must be reported immediately to the DSL. An allegation of abuse by a teacher or volunteer will be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with child protection procedures. Pending a full investigation, the member of staff may be suspended from duty.

An allegation against the DSL should be reported to the Principal.

An allegation against the Principal or the DSL must also be reported to Karl Wilkinson, Orbital Education's Regional Head of Schools, at karl@orbital.education or by calling **+44 161 485 7091**.

Relevant Ecuadorian laws:

- CODIGO DE LA NIÑEZ Y ADOLESCENCIA, publicado por Ley No. 100. en Registro Oficial 737 de 3 de Enero del 2003.

Required Reading:

[UK Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 \(KCSIE\)](#)

Linked policies

[Safeguarding referral form](#)

Crisis Management

Staff Professional Standards

E-Safety

[Incident Form](#)