



The British International School of Sulaymaniyah

IQ010

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

July 2024

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The British International School of Sulaymaniyah's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly establishment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

1.2 Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff and volunteers whether or not they work in direct contact with students.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp or fieldtrip location) and those provided through third-party providers.

1.3 Statement of commitment to child safety

The British International School of Sulaymaniyah is a child safe school that welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of international students and students with disabilities. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Our school leadership team, comprising the Executive Headmaster, assistants to the Executive Headmaster, Heads of Stages, Team Leaders and Senior Teachers, is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Iraqi and international laws.

2.2 The Executive Headmaster and assistants will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and other school meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

2.3 When working with children, all staff and volunteers at our school have important responsibilities to uphold child safety and wellbeing. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

2.3.1 Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

2.3.2. Maintain a friendly but professional relationship with children, keeping personal life separate from professional duties.

2.3.3. Set clear boundaries about acceptable behaviour, avoiding sharing personal information or becoming too personally involved with children.

2.3.4. Refrain from engaging in activities or relationships that could be seen as favouritism or special treatment. If one-on-one interaction with a student is necessary, such as teaching, instructing or meeting a student individually, this should be conducted in a public area such as a shared classroom, the round tables on the second or third floor foyer, or another space with visibility and access to other adults.

2.3.5. Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students. If you won't give a certain student a second chance in doing a certain task, for instance, clearly communicate the rationale behind it.

2.3.6. Use language that is respectful, age-appropriate, and inclusive. Be clear and consistent in messages to children, explaining rules and expectations.

2.3.7. Listen actively and respond with empathy and understanding. Avoid sarcasm, inappropriate jokes, or language that could be misunderstood. Refrain from communicating in a way that is secretive or could be perceived as inappropriate.

2.3.8. Do not ignore or dismiss children's feelings or concerns.

2.3.9. Always try to avoid unsupervised contact with children and young adults. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, try to conduct it in a public area on the premise. If it is in a classroom or an office, keep the door open.

2.3.10. Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children. Adults will only touch children when absolutely necessary for the activity and will seek the child's consent.

2.3.11. The school has policies and procedures for taking, using and storing photographs or images of children. Permission will be sought from parents, and web-based materials will be carefully monitored. Confidentiality will be maintained to protect the rights of members.

2.3.12. Any suspicion or disclosure of abuse should be reported to the Safeguarding Committee. Detailed records will be kept, and if a serious allegation is made, the individual will be suspended until the investigation is concluded.

2.3.13. Details of any allegation or incident will be recorded, regardless of whether it is reported to authorities. Records will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know. Alleged abusers and children thought to be abused have a right to confidentiality.

3. Diversity and equity

3.1 The rich diversity of our students, families, and community is celebrated, fostering a respectful environment that is free from discrimination, ensuring every individual feels safe and supported. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

3.2 To celebrate diversity and promote inclusion, our school implements the following strategies:

- Multicultural events and festivals: We organise regular events that showcase the diverse cultural backgrounds of our students, such as international food fairs, cultural performances, and heritage celebrations. These activities are mainly scheduled to take place during our Culture Day in May of every year.

- Our inclusive curriculum incorporates diverse perspectives, histories, and experiences, ensuring all students see themselves represented in the learning materials. For instance, History class focuses on ancient history from various parts of the world at the primary stages and moves on to become an international history focusing on recent world matters such as the World Wars, the Cold War, and up until Operation Iraqi Freedom.

- Student-led initiatives: We encourage and support student-led clubs, organisations, and activities that promote cross-cultural understanding and celebrate diversity. Any such initiatives can be directed at Heads of Stages as a proposal for review and approval.

- Multilingual resources: We offer information and resources in multiple languages to ensure all families can access and engage with the school community.

3.3 We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths, and experiences to draw on. We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs.

3.4 For students with disabilities, we ensure our facilities are accessible and accommodate their needs. This includes features like ramps, lifts, and assistive technologies to enable full participation in the school environment.

3.5 When we identify a student with a learning difficulty, we are more mindful in our approach and provide extra support in the classroom. This may involve differentiated instruction, one-to-one assistance, and the use of specialised learning materials and strategies.

4. Suitable staff and volunteers

4.1 We apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

4.2 When recruiting staff, we follow strict recruitment guidelines to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all our students. The guidelines are as follows:

- All applicants must undergo background checks before commencing employment. The information obtained from the background check will be used to assess whether the candidate is fit to work with children and in an educational environment.
- The qualifications, experience, and references of all applicants are verified to confirm their suitability for working with children.
- Clear and comprehensive job descriptions are provided, outlining safeguarding responsibilities and expectations.
- The critical role of child safety and wellbeing is emphasised in all aspects of the position.
- Specific questions are included during interviews to gauge candidates' understanding of safeguarding issues and their commitment to promoting child safety.
- Candidates' responses are evaluated to ensure alignment with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- All staff and volunteers are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training, with regular updates.
- Training covers the identification of signs of abuse, reporting protocols, and the importance of confidentiality.
- Clear policies and procedures are implemented for reporting concerns or allegations of abuse or misconduct.
- Staff are ensured to understand their obligation to promptly report any safeguarding concerns through appropriate channels.
- Ongoing support, supervision, and guidance are provided to staff to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
- An environment is fostered where staff feel comfortable raising concerns and seeking advice.
- Risk assessments are conducted for roles involving direct interaction with children or vulnerable individuals.
- Potential risks are identified and mitigated to uphold the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Safeguarding practices are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practices.

- Feedback is solicited from staff, students, and parents to continuously improve measures and procedures.

5. Complaints and reporting processes

5.1 The British International School of Sulaimaniyah fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's [Whistleblowing and Complaint Policy](#).

5.2 All staff and volunteers are required to report any child protection concerns directly to the Safeguarding Committee. This can be done through the school's internal reporting system or by contacting the committee members directly.

5.3 The Safeguarding Committee will treat each report with the utmost seriousness and confidentiality, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the child is the top priority. They will work closely with the school leadership, families, and relevant authorities to address the concern and provide the necessary support

6. Communications

6.1 We are committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), our Anti-bullying Policy(in development), and responding and reporting procedures.
- displaying posters as reminders and encouragement for positive behaviour with children around the school
- updates in our school newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school meetings and staff meetings.

7. Privacy and information sharing

7.1 When necessary, our school collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families. For detailed information on how our school handles the collection, use and disclosure of this information, please refer to our Schools' [Privacy Policy](#)(in development).

8. The Safeguarding Committee

The Executive Headmaster chairs the Safeguarding Committee. To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, the Executive Headmaster carefully selects committee members from among our experienced teachers and senior staff.

The Safeguarding Committee convenes in two key instances:

1. When a complaint or concern is raised regarding the safety or wellbeing of a student, the committee immediately springs into action to investigate the matter thoroughly and take appropriate action to safeguard the affected child or children.
2. Annually, the committee gathers to review and refine the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. This process allows the committee to incorporate lessons learned, adapt to changing circumstances, and ensure the policy remains robust and effective in protecting our students.

This policy is subject to periodic review and may be amended as necessary. The next scheduled review and potential revision of this policy will take place in July, 2025.