



# International House Aberdeen

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY 2015**

IH Aberdeen is committed to providing a secure and friendly environment where all members of the community, whatever their background or character, are protected from harm and respected by others.

All staff and any other adults involved with IH Aberdeen accept and recognise their responsibilities:

- to safeguard the welfare of children who join the School and any of its programmes
- to continually develop awareness of any issues which might harm these children
- not to make staff or any other adults involved with the School unnecessarily vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuse.

We will endeavour to safeguard children as follows:

- by adopting child protection guidelines and accepted procedures
- by providing children with expected codes of behaviour and ensuring they understand what those are, especially bullying
- by sharing information about child protection and good practice
- by sharing information about any concerns.

IH Aberdeen is also committed to reviewing this policy and good practice every 12 months.

Please note:

- A child in the context of this policy refers to anyone under the age of 18 who has joined IH Aberdeen or is visiting IH Aberdeen.
- This policy applies to all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- This policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Children Act 1989, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the United Kingdom Government in 1991)

### **Statement of Principles**

1. All children have rights. No-one can take away a child's right to be safe.
2. All children have the right to say 'No' if any person tries to do something to them which they feel is wrong.
3. All children have the right to get help against bullies by enlisting the support of friends or by telling an adult.
4. All children must feel they can tell an adult of any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.
5. All children must know that if they go to an adult for help, they will be believed and supported.
6. All children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safeguarded from harm.

## **STAFF GUIDELINES:**

### **Appointed Person for Safeguarding Children**

**Hazel Black**, the Welfare Officer at IH Aberdeen, is the Appointed Person for Safeguarding Children. She can be reached in school hours on 01224 634006. Outside of school working hours, please use the school's emergency phone number 07894 608585. In case of holiday/sickness, please contact **Elizabeth Brown**.

## **How staff should react to safeguarding issues**

### **1) BULLYING**

#### **Definition**

Bullying, defined as wilful and repeated behaviour which has the purpose of making another person unhappy, is not tolerated in any form at IH Aberdeen.

#### **Identifying bullying**

Bullying can take many different forms; it may be physical, emotional, name-calling, showing a lack of respect for another's property, excluding somebody from a social group; there are many possibilities. Cyber bullying through the use of social media, online forums etc is also included in this definition. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes it is done subtly and in such a way that children will be worried about telling staff what is happening. For this reason it is vital that staff are vigilant in noticing changes in behaviour of children, particularly if they become withdrawn.

#### **How to react if you suspect bullying.**

1. Investigate all reports, however seemingly trivial.
2. Ensure that all reports of suspected bullying are logged and that the follow-up is also logged, fully recorded and signed by the senior staff member involved.
3. Once it has been established that bullying has taken/is taking place, explain to the person acting unkindly that their actions have been precisely that and tell them the effect it has had on another / others.
4. Ask them to consider an appropriate way of putting things right and, if necessary, support them in making an apology.
5. Ensure that any apology / reconciliation is done with staff present so that it can be accurately recorded.
6. Should the incident be more serious, conduct no-blame meetings with both parties (bully and bullied). The aim is to clarify the situation through discussion and allow both sides to work out a solution that is satisfactory to them both. This will be recorded by the supervising teacher. (N.B. Under-18s should not be asked to sign any documents.) Send details to the Director of Studies who will inform agents/parents of both parties what has happened and how it has been resolved.
7. If the bullying continues after this meeting then it must be seen as deliberate and requires a more serious response. The Welfare Officer will take immediate action to protect the bullied person and begin procedures to restrict the activities of the bully. The Director of Studies must be informed and decisions will be made which could involve the bully being removed from the site, perhaps to another one. The Director of Studies will keep agents/parents of both parties fully informed.

8. Any further incidents of bullying by the same person would result in them having to leave the School and/or programme and return home as quickly as possible.

## 2) CHILD ABUSE

### Definition

Child Abuse is most often used to describe ways in which children are harmed – usually by adults – with damage to their physical or mental health. There are four broad categories of abuse as follows:

- physical: through hitting, shaking, squeezing etc.
- sexual: through inappropriate touching or contact with a child
- emotional: through persistent lack of attention, unrealistic adult demands
- neglect: failing to provide basic needs of food, proper clothing, safe supervision.

### Identifying child abuse

It can be difficult to identify child abuse as it has various forms. Below are some typical indicators to watch for:

- unexplained injuries
- a child describing an abusive act that has happened to them
- another child telling you of their concern about a friend/fellow student
- sexually explicit behaviour in games/activities
- serious distrust of adults
- difficulty in making friends / socialising with other children.

The last two might appear naturally as the school is a new and strange environment for visiting children who may only stay for 2 or 3 weeks. However, in extreme forms, these might be indicators of a deeper problem.

### How to react if you suspect child abuse

1. If you notice any physical or behavioural signs – contact the Welfare Officer (or School Director of Studies).
2. If you suspect an adult is a threat to a child in some way – contact the Welfare Officer (or School Director of Studies) and continue to monitor the situation.
3. If a child tells you they are being abused – react calmly, reassure the child and if you ask any questions, do so for clarification, not to find out more details; then contact the Welfare Officer (or Director of Studies). **Do not** promise to keep any disclosure a secret.

In any of the above situations, immediately log and record what has happened, what you have seen, suspected or been told. Get your report signed by the senior staff member involved.

The Welfare Officer will then contact the Director of Studies, who will take appropriate action which may involve external agencies (e.g. Joint Child Protection Team) and contacting agents/parents.

## **Essential information on staff: under-18 student ratios for people organising, planning and assessing social programme events**

The British Council, which is responsible for giving this school its accreditation, refers to the "Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits" (HASPEV) document for its guidance on ratios of staff aged 17 or under. The document says that for a general visit to, for example, a museum, a ratio guide would be:

1 adult for every 15-20 students aged 16 to 17

All trips with under-18s organised by IH Aberdeen should observe these ratios as a minimum.

*However, **for each event**, planners and risk assessors need to assess the risks and then put on the risk assessment document appropriate ratios for safe supervision of students.* For example, ratios for swimming in the sea are very different.

*Please note: this policy is adapted from an original policy created by Nigel Heritage, EFL Consultant, Dorset, 2007 (heritage.nigel@googlemail.com)*