

Child Protection Policy

UPDATED: June 2009

Table of Contents

1	Guiding Principles	3
2	Designated Member of Staff	3
3	Categories of Abuse	4
	Physical Abuse	4
	Neglect.....	4
	Sexual Abuse	4
	Emotional Abuse or Neglect	4
4	Action to be taken by School Staff	4
5	Record Keeping	5
6	Training	5
7	Confidentiality	5
8	Allegations Against Staff	6
9	Special Circumstances	6
9.1	Recruitment	6
9.2	Induction.....	7
9.3	Residential and Off-Site Trips.....	7

1 Guiding Principles

Berlin British School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Berlin British School is a school in which we believe that all children and young people have the right to protection from abuse and neglect and that the welfare of young people is of paramount importance. All adults have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and ensuring that they are protected from harm.

All staff (teaching staff, teaching assistants, administrative staff, the Vorstand, the Verein) and volunteers at Berlin British School have a *duty* to ensure that all children within our care are safe and protected. All staff and volunteers have a duty to ensure that if there are any concerns relating to the welfare and/or safety of a young person that the procedures highlighted in this document are followed.

2 Designated Member of Staff

The designated members of staff with responsibility for child protection are Suzanne Smith-Siebold and Carol McWilliam (Learning Support Co-ordinator – Lower and Middle School and Senior School, respectively).

Their responsibilities are as follows:

- To undertake regular child protection training and ensure all staff and volunteers know how to recognise and report any concerns or indications that a child is or has been neglected or abused.
- To be the point of contact for staff who have concerns or information that a young person may be or has been suffering abuse or about whom there are grave concerns.
- To provide information to the Vorstand regarding the number, nature and outcomes of referrals made.
- To report any concerns to the appropriate authorities and will follow the jurisdictions and procedures set down by the local authorities for Berlin.

A member of the Vorstand (Jane Mattishent) has been appointed as Governor in charge of child protection..

3 Categories of Abuse

Through day-to-day contact with pupils and work with families, education staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring those to concern to appropriate agencies (social services and/or police).

Evidence of abuse can include:

Physical Abuse: non accidental injuries, bruising, wounding burns, fractures. Indicators include:

- Obvious signs of injury
- Injuries which are unusual or unexplained
- Injuries which, while explained, are frequent

Neglect: the chronic inattention to basic needs. Indicators include:

- Dirty, unkempt appearance
- Developmental delay
- Low self esteem
- Hunger

Sexual Abuse: the involvement of children or young people in sexual activity. Indicators include:

- Physical difficulties such as wetting or soiling
- Extreme variations in behaviour
- Sexualised language, behaviour or play
- Indirect disclosure through play, drawing or written work

Emotional Abuse or Neglect: persistent emotional ill treatment such as the extreme denial of love, affection or approval. Indicators include:

- Low self esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety.
- Attention seeking behaviours
- Emotional developmental delay

Staff will be trained to recognise and respond to the categories and potential indicators of abuse.

4 Action to be taken by School Staff

All staff have a duty to be vigilant to the indicators of abuse and to refer concerns to the designated member of staff for child protection. All concerns should be logged/recorded

using the 'Safety Concern Form' (see Appendix A) and referred to Suzanne Smith-Siebold or Carol McWilliam. Records should be written as soon as possible after the observation. The record should include what was noticed or told by the young person and should be signed and dated. It may also be relevant to include a diagram of the incident location. Suzanne Smith-Siebold or Carol McWilliam will provide support and make any necessary referrals to the appropriate authorities.

5 Record Keeping

Where concerns arise about the safety or wellbeing of a pupil, or there are indications that the child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, staff will record:

- The reason for the concern
- What was said or witnessed and details of any other persons present
- Dates and times of incidents and when the notes were made
- Date, time and outcome of any discussions with the head teacher or other relevant outside body or authority.

Staff should use the 'Safety Concern Form' (Appendix A) and completed forms should be passed to the designated persons, Suzanne Smith-Siebold, Carol McWilliam. All written records, welfare concerns and child protection records are kept in a locked file in the head teacher's office.

NB: These records form evidence and may be used in the child protection referral and any subsequent investigation or legal proceedings, they are exempt from the open file regulations and do not have to be made available to parents or carers requesting access to the pupil's files.

6 Training

All staff in school will receive Child Protection training as part of their induction. This will be updated annually by the Designated Teachers (Suzanne Smith-Siebold, Carol McWilliam). The Designated Teachers (Suzanne Smith-Siebold, Carol McWilliam) will undertake training for designated teachers at least every two years.

7 Confidentiality

Confidential and personal information about children, families or other within the school should be kept confidential and privacy respected. Where there are concerns about a child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, information must be shared with the

Designated Teachers (Suzanne Smith-Siebold, Carol McWilliam) in the first instance and will be subsequently shared with the appropriate authorities, if deemed necessary.

If staff or other adults in school have concerns, either due to what they have seen or heard or in relation to a direct disclosure, they cannot keep that information confidential. It must be shared with the Designated Teachers (Suzanne Smith-Siebold, Carol McWilliam) in the interests of safeguarding the young person.

Other staff may need to be alerted to concerns about a child or young person possibly in order to monitor the concern or to gather further evidence prior to a referral being made, or to assist in providing appropriate support to a child or young person after a referral has been made. *Information should only be shared on a strict need to know basis.*

8 Allegations Against Staff

Berlin British School believes that all members of the school community are entitled to receive care and protection from harm. Inappropriate behaviour towards pupils or staff is unacceptable and we will ensure that any concerns or allegations of impropriety are dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively.

In the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or other adult in school, the Head Teacher will seek advice from the local authorities and will agree the procedure to be followed. Any staff disclosing information regarding inappropriate behaviour by colleagues will be listened to and supported. Parents of a child allegedly abused by a member of staff or other adult in school will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

9 Special Circumstances

9.1 Recruitment

At least one member of the recruitment panel has undertaken the 'Safer Recruitment' online course provided by the National College for School Leadership and ensures that interviews to appoint staff reflect the importance of safeguarding pupils. As a school we have the commitment with the recruitment and selection policy to be robust in following up references.

9.2 Induction

All staff, including supply staff, on site contractors, support services and volunteers will be given induction information regarding this policy. All staff may undertake the 'Safer Recruitment' online course provided by the National College for School Leadership although this is not a requirement.

9.3 Residential and Off-Site Trips

Policies and procedures will take into account:

- Health and safety procedures
- Ensuring pupils understand their expectations regarding acceptable behaviour
- Having written consent and, if necessary, a parents' meeting to give a briefing on the outing
- Ensuring accommodation is suitable
- Having an accompanying adult trained in first aid and other equipment

Jonathan Matthews-Hirsch

Addendum to Child Protection Policy

In the event of an allegation of child abuse or a disclosure

- 1. If appropriate (consult Head of School if in doubt), discuss your concerns with the child's parents or carers.**
 - If, after talking to the child's parents or carers, you are still unhappy about the situation, or if the explanations that you have been given do not ease your concerns, immediately inform the Head.
 - If a discussion with the child's parents or carers is **inappropriate**, immediately contact the Head and then, with the Head's agreement, the Child Protection Officer and the local Social Services Department (Jugendamt or Familien u Beratungsstelle).

- 2. The following details are essential when involving Social Services:**
 - Your name, address, telephone number and your role.
 - Information about the child, including their name, date of birth, address and school.
 - What you have observed or been told by the child, providing dates and times, where possible, and details of the child's emotional state at the time.
 - What the child has said in response to any suspicions or concerns you have had.
 - The action you have taken so far.
 - When you make the referral to Social Services, agree with the person to whom you are making the referral what the parents and the child will be told, by whom and when.
 - Confirm telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours. Social services should acknowledge receipt within one working day. If you haven't heard back within three working days you should contact Social Services again.

- 3. Social Services will advise you on what to do next, including whether to involve parents or carers. Social Services will then take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate further enquiries are made.**

- 4. If the child needs urgent medical attention, parental consent is necessary. After this, consult with Social Services or the police if considered appropriate.**

- 5. Keep an accurate timed and dated record of what you have seen, heard and done. It is essential that this is done accurately and managed carefully and securely – this evidence may be used in a court of law.**

Your personal responsibilities

To ensure you protect children from harm and minimise the likelihood of allegations being made against you, you must adopt a personal code of conduct i.e. some key principles of good practice:

A personal code of conduct

- Respect all individuals, whatever their age, developmental stage, ability, sex, sexual orientation or ethnicity.
- Place the safety and well-being of children first – before any personal or organisational goals and before loyalty to friends and colleagues.
- Form only appropriate relationships with children, based on mutual trust and respect.
- Be aware of the relative powerlessness of children, and especially disabled children, compared with adults.
- Be committed to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children.
- BBS has a child protection policy and an anti-bullying policy accessible on the website; make sure that you are aware of these policies and your responsibilities to support them.

Pointers to good practice

- Promote to all staff and volunteers throughout BBS the policy statement and code of conduct regarding child protection
- Plan the work of our school in such a way as to minimise situations in which abuse might occur.

Minimising situations in which allegations of abuse might occur may involve the following:

- Adopting an open door policy where children or other adults can share concerns with appropriate people.
- Reducing occasions when adults are alone with children.
- Involving parents as much as possible.
- Encouraging parents to take full responsibility for their child's safety.

Staff recruitment

Organisations should make sure they are aware of existing and new requirements in relation to the recruitment of paid staff and volunteers to work with children.

Staff training

All staff and volunteers should be trained in the prevention of child abuse.

Dealing with disclosure: practical guidance

Disclosure may take place at the most inopportune of times – for example, just as the class is about to set off on a school trip, or on a Friday afternoon as the bell goes. Whatever the inconvenience, a disclosure cannot wait and must be dealt with immediately.

Each occasion will be unique but there are basic principles that staff should follow while also adapting to individual circumstances. This guide outlines the approach that staff might take to help them deal with disclosure.

The overall guiding principles that all staff should carry with them include:

- always act where there are concerns
- seek advice and refer to the designated person – do not promise complete confidentiality
- do not investigate, but do listen and reassure.

A member of staff or a volunteer who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to offer reassurance. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

Ultimately, all staff have the right to make a referral to the police or Social Services directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, e.g. they are the only adult on the school premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home. In such an instance, however, contact the Head immediately and then, with the Head's agreement, the local Social Services Department (Jugendamt or Familien u Beratungsstelle).

Three stages of action

The actions that a member of staff should take can be divided into three stages:

Stage 1: Dealing with the disclosure as it happens; ensuring that the child's immediate needs are met and that they feel supported.

Stage 2: Ensuring that the Head of School is immediately informed.

Stage 3: Ensuring that details are recorded as soon as possible; that they feel satisfied that the disclosure has been followed up and is acted upon appropriately.

Stage 1

When a disclosure is made to a member of staff it is most important that they understand that they do not have to investigate the disclosure themselves. The disclosure must always be taken seriously and dealt with according to procedures even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain.

The member of staff should:

- Listen to the child, keeping calm and offering reassurance.
- Observe visible bruises and marks but not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Allow the child to lead the discussion and to talk freely if a disclosure is made.
- Listen to the child without investigating.
- Avoid using questions such as 'Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?'
- Accept what the pupil says without challenge.
- Reassure them that they are doing the right thing in telling and that they recognise how hard it is for them to tell.

They should not:

- Press for details by asking questions such as 'What did they do next?'
- Blame or criticise either the child or the alleged perpetrator.
- Ask the child to repeat what they said to a colleague.
- Promise confidentiality – but they should explain that the child has done the right thing, and who will need to be told and why.

Stage 2

As soon as possible, once the immediate comfort and safety of the child are secured, the member of staff should inform the Head of school of the disclosure. If the Head is not available, the Deputy should be informed.

It can be particularly difficult to handle a disclosure which involves another member of staff. In all cases the Head should be informed. Where allegations are made against the Head then the chair of governors or safeguarding governor should be contacted.

Stage 3

The member of staff receiving the disclosure should note down details as soon as possible. It is vital that clear and concise notes are made as soon after the disclosure as possible in order to complete a more detailed record and incident sheet later. Immediate notes should include:

- date and time
- place and context of disclosure or concern

- important facts provided, e.g. names mentioned.

Wherever possible, staff should record information as it was told to them using the language of the child rather than their own interpretation of it. See form mentioned on website re child protection policy for recording incidents.

In the case of bruises or observed injuries a body map (a drawing of a body outline, upon which the location of bruises/injuries can be indicated) might be completed. Any records should be copied to the Head and will be used during the referral process.

It is important that staff are instructed to report factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. They might convey their intuitive thoughts but these should be recognised as such and should not form part of the record.

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up; it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This should include reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

In some cases additional counselling might be needed and the member of staff should be encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

Finally, the school should evaluate the effectiveness of its policy, asking itself:

- Was the member of staff who received the disclosure clear about the procedures to follow?
- Did the member of staff follow them appropriately?
- Do any adjustments need to be made to the policy?

No one wants to receive a disclosure. Knowing what to do will make the process a little bit easier.

Taken and adapted from an article by Sue Connell on www.teachingexpertise.com