

BIPS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction to Child's Protection Policy

The Brilliant International Private School has been pledged to go "beyond just education". Therefore, we work together as a team to ensure that the safety and protection of every child under its care is at its utmost observance and to promote a child-friendly environment wherein a holistic learning atmosphere is present.

"The right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse by those looking after them" (article 19: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

"When organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration." (Article 3: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Purpose

- To have a clear layout on how to deal with child protection issues sensitively and professionally.
- To develop a common understanding among the staff and all concerned personnel and to continually develop good practice.
- To properly channel all matters regarding these cases and avoiding any legal disputes that may arise and ensuring that the benefit of the child is well supported all throughout

Definition of Terms

□ CHILD

For the purposes of this document, a “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

□ CHILD ABUSE

According to the **World Health Organization**, “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes „all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

□ DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the school’s work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

□ INDIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Having access to information on children in the context of the school’s work, such as children’s names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.

□ CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the school is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

Definition of Child Protection

Child protection

It is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both *intentional* and *unintentional* harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of the school -and individuals associated with the school - towards children in their care.

1. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

A child protection policy provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines on which to base individual and organisational practice in relation to areas, such as:

- Creating a "child safe" and "child friendly" school (in relation to environmental safety as well as protection against physical, psychological and sexual abuse).
- Prevention of abuse.
- Personnel recruitment and training.
- Robust management systems.
- Guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour / attitude.
- Guidelines for communications regarding children.
- Recognizing, reporting and reacting to allegations of abuse.
- Ramifications of misconduct for those failing to follow the policy.

A policy is not necessarily solely directed towards sexual abuse, but rather may also encompass all aspects of child protection, including, but not limited to: **disciplinary measures, health and safety measures, physical harm, working with information about children, proper recruitment and managerial procedures, and the ramifications of misconduct.**

Child abuse

Types of violence / abuse experienced by children

- Self-harm:** e.g. deliberately cutting or harming oneself; suicidal thoughts; Attempted and actual suicide.
- Peer abuse:** e.g. bullying (physical and/or psychological); physical and sexual abuse; gang violence.

BIPS VISION “Conducive & holistic learning atmosphere”

- **Abuse by adults:** e.g. domestic violence (physical, psychological, sexual); corporal punishment in schools and organisations; sexual abuse and exploitation.

Overview of child Protection and Policies

- Schools have a moral and legal responsibility to protect children within their care.
- Schools have been, are and will continue to be vulnerable to harbouring abuse until the issues are brought into the open.
- Child protection policies and procedures help to create „child-safe“ schools:
 - That have an "aware culture“
 - That do everything possible to prevent intentional and unintentional harm coming to children
 - Where children feel safe
 - Where children can speak out
 - Where children are listened to
 - Where children & staff are respected and empowered
 - A strong policy will guide the school in dealing with difficult situations. When there is a crisis it may be harder to think clearly. If the school has a reliable policy it can react in an informed way and avoid accusations of a biased response in any participant’s favour or disadvantage.
 - Schools without child protection policies, guidelines and systems are more vulnerable to false or malicious accusations of abuse which can destroy the school’s reputation.

Risk management

Risk management means identifying the potential for an accident or incident to occur and taking steps to reduce the possibility of it occurring.

For example:

1. Failure to properly screen job applicants may lead to a child abuser working for your organization.
2. Failure to provide safety equipment (clothing, eye protection etc.) for

BIPS VISION “Conducive & holistic learning atmosphere”

activities such as labwork or playground games may result in a child being injured through your vocational programme

3. Failure to keep a child’s records securely locked up may result in them being lost and/or getting into the wrong hands (e.g. other children who may then tease the child or an adult who uses sensitive information to emotionally blackmail a child).

Our admin team will therefore work on correctly identifying risks and taking steps to minimise them in the school is essential to the development of effective child protection policies and procedures.

Steps on risk assessment

STEP 1 - Identify risks to children within the school. We make sure that we involve all personnel in the organization in this process, including children. This is because different people will have different perceptions of what constitutes „risk“.

STEP 2 - Group risks to children that we have identified in Step 1 according to where they might occur in the school. The following are only suggested areas of risk.

- Staff and volunteers* (e.g. lack of proper screening in recruitment and supervision, management systems, training on how to handle children)
- Place / physical environment* (e.g. fire exits, recreational areas, lab facilities)
- Activities and programmes* (e.g. education, health, community outreach, vocational training, outings, exchange visits)
- Information* (e.g. storage of children’s personal information, recording of allegations of abuse, dissemination of information on where to get help)

This process will help us analyse the risks more systematically and will also help to identify who is responsible for each area of work where risks to children have to be managed.

STEP 3 - Rank the risks in terms of *low, medium* or *high* risk using the guiding questions:

- What / how bad would the consequences be? (This takes precedence over the second question as a deciding factor)
- What is the likelihood of these consequences occurring?

STEP 4 - Decide on next steps:

- i) Do nothing (no action needed - low risk & benefits outweigh risks)
- ii) Monitor more closely for a set period in order to make a more informed decision
(low risk)
- iii) Change activities / policies / plans / procedures to reduce risk (medium to high risk)
- iv) Stop doing the activity or procedure.

2. BIPS Safety Policy

We recognise that for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse.

Our school will therefore:

- a) Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- b) Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for personal health and social education (PSHEC), which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- d) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from outside the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within the school who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures.
- b) The School Counselor's job to deal with all cases that violate the child protection.
- c) It is the role of the Admin officer to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make appropriate, timely referrals if practicable. Additionally, it is the role of the Admin Officer to ensure all staff employed, including temporary staff and volunteers within the school are aware of the school's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.
- d) The Governing Body and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes.

4. Procedures

a) Staffs are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. There may be other adults in the school who rarely work unsupervised, more usually working alongside members of the school staff. However the Principal will ensure they are aware of the school's policy and the identity of the Admin Officer.

b) Any member of staff, volunteer to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the Admin Officer/Counselor or in their absence, the School Supervisor. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

c) The Admin Officer/Counselor will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations in accordance with the procedures outlined within this policy.

d) The school will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child with the parents unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken.

5. Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with a pupil to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the Admin Officer/Counselor and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

6. Records and Monitoring

a) Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school.

b) Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

c) These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a secure place by the Counselor. In the same way notes must be kept of any pupil who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

7. Safe School, Safe Staff

a) It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.

b) Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Currently, in UAE this would mean the MoE/Police only). Whilst it is permissible to ask the child(ren) simple, non-leading

BIPS VISION “Conducive & holistic learning atmosphere”

questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.

c) If for any reason it is decided that a referral is not appropriate, it will be necessary to **address matters in accordance with the school’s complaints/disciplinary procedures.**