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# Child Protection for International Schools

## Module 5 – Promoting Good Practice

**In this module we will focus on:**

- the different laws and statutory guidance that protect children and young people
- what you and your school or college can do to ensure that the children in your care stay safe from harm
- good practice for your school or college
- the importance of underpinning safeguarding in your organisation.

## The law

The law and statutory guidance vary internationally. Many countries have mandatory reporting procedures and so it is important that you understand what these are and know how to act if required to do so. Internationals schools are subject to the laws of the country where they are based.

A list of international, regional and local guidance can be found on The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children website. A link can be found in the Resources section when you leave this course.

## Further information for British International Schools

The following information does not have a legal basis for schools outside of the UK but can provide a good source of guidance and best practice.

**Children Act 1989**

This Act describes the paramount nature of children's welfare and the duty of care agencies and organisations have to protect them.

**Education Act 2002**

Requires governing bodies for schools (including nursery schools) and further education institutions (FEIs) and local education authorities to make arrangements to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

**Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**

Under the 2003 Act, it is an offence for any person in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (regardless of their nationality or residence status) to perform FGM or to assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself. It is also an offence to assist a non-UK national or resident to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or permanent UK resident.

**Children Act 2004**

Enhances the provisions of the 1989 Act and details the arrangements to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

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**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

The Act enabled a central service that would bar unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. Today it is called the Disclosure and Barring Service and it provides criminal records and barring functions to help employers make safer recruitment decisions.

**Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009**

The Act requires all immigration staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the UK.

**Equality Act 2010**

The Act simplifies the law on discrimination. A child cannot be unlawfully discriminated against because of their sex, race, disability, religion, belief or sexual orientation. There are exceptions that should be considered for example, collective worship.

**Education Act 2011**

The Education Act gave teachers new powers to discipline pupils to restore order in the classroom and imposed reporting restrictions in relation to allegations by a pupil that a teacher has committed a criminal offence.

**Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**

The Protection of Freedoms Act introduced the Disclosure and Barring Service, an organisation that conducts checks on people who want to work with children and adults who may be at risk of abuse. They also hold lists of people who are barred from this type of work.

**Children and Families Act 2014**

Introduced Education, Health and Care plans to replace Statements and learning difficulties assessments for children and young people. It also simplified the adoption process.

**The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**

Requires a school's curriculum and teaching to take into regard the Equality Act 2010, British values and the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

**Modern Slavery Act 2015**

The Modern Slavery Act gives law enforcement the tools to help with modern day slavery. The law makes provision for independent trafficking advocates.

**Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act contains powers to help the UK respond to the threat of terrorism. It includes Prevent, a mandatory reporting duty covering schools, colleges, universities, health, local authorities, police and prisons.

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**Children and Social Work Act 2017**

This Act improves support for looked after children and care leavers, promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children, and makes provision about the regulation of social workers.

**Digital Economy Act 2017**

The Digital Economy Act provides important protection for citizens from spam email and nuisance calls and protects children from online pornography.

**Data Protection Act 2018**

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the European General Data Protection Regulation. It takes digital technology into consideration and gives individuals more control over the use of their data.

**Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019**

The Act strengthens the powers of the police to help prevent and investigate terrorist offences. It also makes provision enabling persons at ports and borders to be questioned for national security.

## This information is not statutory for international schools

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children**
  A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
  Statutory guidance for schools and colleges.
- **Prevent duty guidance**
  Statutory guidance for Scotland, England and Wales.
- **Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation 2016**
  Statutory guidance on FGM for England and Wales.

In England, the Department for Education is responsible for child protection. It provides legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

## Good practice

All children have a right to be and feel safe in your school and their parents or carers also have a right to expect that their child will be safe in your organisation's care.

The International Task Force on Child Protection sets out the following principles for schools.

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

To ensure these rights are fulfilled, your school must operate within a culture of safety where safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is embedded into everything you do.

Staff too can feel protected from allegations because they are clear about their role, responsibilities and boundaries, and both children and staff feel listened to because they know their organisation gives welfare a high priority.

## Safeguarding a child

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

In practice, this means that your organisation and its staff will be committed to:

- treating the welfare of children as paramount and recognising and respecting children's rights
- developing good links with parents and carers and encouraging their involvement in the organisation's work
- promoting positive child-centred relationships between staff and children
- ensuring all staff listen to children and respond to their needs
- training staff in your organisation's safeguarding policies and ensuring they fully understand their legal and moral responsibility to be vigilant and report anything that causes concern
- having procedures in place with regard to visitors to the site including volunteers.

## Good practice

All schools have policies and procedures to safeguard children, but they are worthless if staff do not fully understand and follow them.

Is your organisation prepared and do you know where to find the policies? Use the checklist below to see if there is anything missing.

My organisation...

- has a safer recruitment policy
- meets the legal requirements that are necessary when employing people to work with children
- has a child protection policy and procedures
- has a safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- has a behaviour policy
- has an anti-bullying policy and procedures
- has a whistle-blowing policy
- has an acceptable use policy in relation to technology
- has an equality and diversity policy
- has an intimate care policy
- has a code of conduct (staff behaviour policy) signed by staff and volunteers.

## Embedding your policies and procedures

To ensure that your policies and procedures are rooted in all the school does, you should ensure the following is in place.

- Make sure all staff, parents and children know who the designated safeguarding person is and their role
- Include safeguarding training as part of the induction of all new staff and volunteers
- Provide regular, up-to-date safeguarding training for all staff to develop and maintain their overall awareness

- Provide training specifically on the organisation's own safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure that staff understand what to do in their own setting
- Provide regular refresher training for all staff and volunteers, including training on specific harm; for example, extremism and radicalisation
- Make safeguarding a standing agenda item at staff meetings
- Include articles in newsletters for staff and parents
- Have an area devoted to safeguarding on your website
- Conduct regular supervision and monitoring of staff to ensure they are clear about their roles, responsibilities and boundaries
- Develop a culture where staff feel confident to approach the safeguarding lead to discuss concerns about a child or young person, or a colleague's behaviour
- Help children to understand what acceptable behaviour is, how they can stay safe from harm and how to speak up if they have worries
- Ensure staff understand what acceptable behaviour is and the types of behaviour that will make them vulnerable to allegations
- Ensure staff understand that allegations against staff, parents or anyone else who has contact with children are reported immediately

*Further information*

Your school may require you to:

- Read at least part one of the English statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and if you work directly with children, Annex A of the guidance.
- Maintain awareness of female genital mutilation and understand they have a mandatory duty to report any concerns.
- Read the DfE guidance on the Prevent duty and know what to do if they are concerned that a child or young person is at risk of radicalisation.

## Essential questions

The International Task Force on Child Protection recommend schools ask the following 13 questions.

1. Has the school created a definition of child protection with ensuing policies/procedures which are fully understood and followed by board members/ governors/owners, school leaders, staff, students, parents and volunteers?

2. Do the school's culture and values support and encourage good practice leading to enhanced child protection?

3. Does the school comply with all legal and statutory requirements/obligations in relation to child protection within the country in which it operates? Does it have effective working relationships with support agencies (where they exist)?

4. Does the school have a robust policy and procedures, which are successfully implemented to ensure that it only employs and engages people of sound moral character? If so, is the school compliant?

5. Does the school have robust and fully implemented policies and procedures to ensure that all helpers, volunteers and contract workers are people of sound moral character and suitable to work with children?

6. Does the school communicate its child protection policy and procedures publicly?

7. Are child protection policies and procedures reviewed with sufficient regularity and systematically?

8. Is there a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) in the school with oversight of child protection procedures and related school policies?

9. Do the school's operational procedures support and encourage good practice leading to enhanced child protection, including:
    a. training and support
    b. identification/disclosure
    c. reporting in line with policy.

10. Are the school's buildings and facilities, security and protection measures compatible with child protection and related policies?

11. Does child protection education and online/virtual safety form part of the written and taught curriculum?

12. Are students, staff and volunteers aware of what to do if they feel uncomfortable or have concerns about mistreatment or abuse?

13. What measures are taken by the school to ensure the safety and protection of students in homestay accommodation or on residential trips and student-exchange programmes, and to what extent are they successful?

## Underpinning principles of safeguarding

As a person who has chosen to work with children, you have both legal and moral responsibilities towards them and there is a great deal you can do to safeguard them and promote their wellbeing.

Here are some underpinning principles to help you.

- Be aware that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Respect all individuals regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, developmental stage, sexual orientation, religion, belief or whether the individual is disabled.
- Be responsible for your own actions and behaviour. Develop your own personal code of conduct that you abide by at all times; this includes dress code, use of language and general behaviour. Avoid any conduct which could lead to questions about your motives or intentions.
- Ensure your safeguarding training is current and you understand your school's policies and procedures. Be absolutely clear that you know what to do if you have concerns about a child or a colleague's behaviour.
- If someone makes an allegation about you, ensure you report it to your designated safeguarding lead without delay.
- In your work with children, be open, accessible, always prepared to listen and supportive of children's needs.

### Safer working practice

- Do not engage in personal email, text or telephone conversations with children.
- Do not accept personal or 'friends' requests on social networking sites.
- Do not accept gifts unless they are small tokens of appreciation.
- Do not offer lifts to children outside the agreements of your position.

- You should follow your organisation's policy and procedures with regard to physical intervention or contact.
- There should be no unauthorised photography or filming of children.
- You should report to your safeguarding lead if a child or young person has become infatuated with you.
- You should report to a senior member of staff if a pupil or parent has become dependent on you.
- You should be open and honest at all times when dealing with children and young people, so nothing can be misinterpreted.

## Scenarios

**Is this acceptable practice?**

Thinking about what you have learned in this module consider the following scenarios and decide whether this is acceptable practice.

1. A child has your private contact details and has started to text you. You decide not to tell anyone and delete the messages.

   **Not Acceptable** -  By not reporting this to your line manager or safeguarding lead, you leave yourself open to allegations.

2. You have recently been on a political rally and you decide to wear your t-shirt promoting a political message whilst volunteering with young people.

   **Not Acceptable** - The manner in which you dress should be absent of any political or contentious logos.

3. Ali's mum has forgotten to pick her up after the club session has finished; it's getting dark and you are not happy about leaving her. You call her mum to see what has happened and her mum told you her car has broken down. Is it possible you could give her a lift as it is on your way home?

   **Acceptable** - In some situations, you may have to offer transport to a young person. Where possible you should obtain the parent's consent. You should have at least one other adult in the car.

## Summary

## Checklist

Do you do everything you can to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing? Use the checklist below to see if there is anything missing.

In my work, I...

- am open-minded and respect everyone
- have my own personal code of conduct that I follow
- make sure my safeguarding training is up to date
- understand the school's policies and procedures
- stay aware of the children and their needs and behaviours
- stay aware of my own behaviour and that of my colleagues
- am always prepared to listen and support children's needs.

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This concludes your course on protecting children and young people. You have learned about the importance of children's developmental milestones and the different dimensions of child development, what abuse is, the different types of abuse and the effects it can have on children and young people. You know what the signs and indicators of abuse are and what to do if a child discloses harm to you or you have suspicions of abuse. You are aware of what happens after you or your safeguarding lead has reported abuse and you understand the principles of good practice as they apply to your organisation and to you as an individual.

You are now ready to complete the corresponding questionnaire.