

**RGS Muscat**  
**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures**



<b>Written by</b>	
<b>Approved by</b>	
<b>Review date</b>	

## **Rationale of Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

At RGS Muscat, we recognise our duty and responsibility to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The School recognises that effective Child Protection practice requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in recognising and responding to Child Protection situations.

This policy provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work, and provides a framework to ensure that all practice in the area of Child Protection is consistent and will enable every child to be healthy and stay safe. It also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff to ensure that statutory and other duties are fully met.

The welfare of the child is paramount, and as such this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and following case by case self-evaluation.

## **Terminology and Definitions**

**Safeguarding:** The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

**Abuse:** A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

**Child Abuse:** Any act of commission or commission by a parent or guardian... (or any other person) ... which would endanger or impair the child's physical or emotional wellbeing or that are judged by a mixture of community values and professionals to be inappropriate.

**Categories of Abuse:** Physical Abuse; Neglect; Sexual Abuse; Emotional and Psychological Abuse.

**Significant Risk of Harm:** 'Significant risk of harm' is the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in the best interests of the child.

**Best Interests of the Child:** The principle, 'in the best interests of the child' guides internal policies and service provision for children and young persons, including the area of Child Protection.

## **Responsibilities**

Child abuse occurs in all communities regardless of the gender of the child or perpetrator, wealth, religion, culture or ethnicity. Schools as institutions working with children and young people, become more attractive to those who wish to exploit or abuse children. All members of the school community have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All members of the school community must model appropriate and healthy relationships with children.

## **The Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the Head of School to account for its implementation.

The Board of Governors will appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead [*or*, link governor] to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full Board of Governors. This is always a different person from the DPCP.

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The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the principal, where appropriate.

Any Governor who is on School grounds, or attends any School events, in any capacity, where children are present, must undertake the 'volunteer safeguarding training' to ensure a consistent approach to all members of the School community.

All Governors will read [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

All Governors will read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Keeping Children Safe in Education document and sign the Declaration of Acceptance.

## **The Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for formulating and implementing policy and procedures which;

- Prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people i.e. safe recruitment procedures and single central vetting records.
- Promote safe practices and challenge poor and unsafe practices in the whole school context.
- Identify and support a Designated Person(s) for Child Protection who is a member of the senior leadership team.
- Lead a team which identifies instances where there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare and initiate appropriate action/intervention to keep them safe.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.

*"Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child."*

## **The Designated Person(s) for Child Protection (DPCP) (also known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL))**

At RGS Muscat the Designated Persons for Child Protection (DPCP) in the first instance is the Ms. Rihab Al Hosni. The Link Governor for Safeguarding is TBC.

The DPCP is responsible for the schools' approach to:

- Policy
- Practice
- Procedures
- Professional development

Specifically, the DPCP will:

- Ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to child protection and know who is responsible for child protection issues.
- Maintain staff awareness and confidence regarding child protection procedures and ensure new staff are aware of these procedures – coordinate training in this respect.
- Coordinate action where child abuse is suspected.
- Attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on their behalf.
- Maintain and update Child Protection records including outcomes of case conferences and other sensitive information - to be secured (double lock) in a confidential file and disseminated only on a 'need to know basis'. The secure file is maintained by the Head of Pastoral. If the Head of Pastoral is not available the Head of Secondary School will step in.
- Keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities at the highest level.

### **Prevention awareness**

Prevention is better than having to respond to actual abuse or malpractice. The school should actively engage in reflective practices with all staff to safeguard children, to identify vulnerabilities in current practices, and to learn from experiences.

Key areas of reflection:

Reflective questions might be: How effective are our current practices, policies and procedures in the following areas? How does our school culture help or hinder child protection in the following areas?

have a shared responsibility to help keep children and young people safe by: Providing a safe environment for children and young people.

Model safe student staff relationships at all times.

Identifying young people who are at significant risk of harm.

Taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure that children are kept safe both at home and at school.

Understanding school policy and procedures related to child protection and safeguarding and knowing who is the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Contributing to professional training and awareness of Child Protection issues.

All staff will have read this policy and signed to confirm this. Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018 states the following 6 steps must be clearly understood and implemented by all staff members.

### **1. Prevention**

Staff and managers create an environment where children's rights are respected and abuse prevented. Policies such as safer recruitment, anti-bullying, staff conduct, parental conduct, safe touch etc. policy review system in place.

### **2. Awareness and Sensitisation**

Ensure all staff, students and parents are aware of the problem of child abuse, sexual exploitation and risks to children, aware of the procedure and duties to provide a safety net for children.

### **3. Reporting**

Everyone in the school must be clear about their duty to report malpractice and/or indications of abuse without delay.

### **4. Monitoring**

A single point of contact for all child protection concerns to gain an overview of emerging patterns.

### **5. Responding**

The school has a clear protocol for responding to child safety concerns and actual abuse, appropriate personnel and structures in place.

### **6. Follow up**

The school provides support where needed and an opportunity to learn, reflect, develop and review.

### **PROCESS FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN:**

1. Complete one of the reporting forms immediately ,no later than 24 hours after disclosure or concern raised.
2. Send/deliver the Form1/Report of Concern to the DPCP/DSL.
3. DPCP/DSL will be in contact within 24 hours with follow up information.
4. Where deemed appropriate or necessary. You may not know the outcome of the disclosure but will be told your concern has been received and acted on.

### **IMMEDIATE REPORT OF CONCERN OR REFERRAL:**

Disclosed or suspected: > Neglect

> Sexual Abuse

> Physical Abuse/Psychological/Emotional abuse

> Grooming

> Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting > Alcohol and Drug Use

> Self Harm

> Suicidal Ideation

Abuse Further Defined – Abuse Myths And Realities

The following section aims to provide more detailed information regarding behavioural indicators of abuse in relation to the different types of abuse. It should be noted that children respond to abuse in different ways so the guidance should not be seen as exhaustive or behaviours belonging exclusively to one form of abuse.

***Note:** Behavioural indicators in themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. There can for example be several explanations why a child is avoiding class which are not abuse related. Being aware of indicators along with other factors can contribute significantly toward understanding a child's distress and ultimately safeguarding the child.*

Indicators are Indicators and not concrete proof of abuse or neglect. Staff observation and reporting helps the Head of Pastoral and Safe School Committee 'see the bigger picture' which helps identify patterns which indicate the potential frequency and seriousness of abuse. This information also helps inform our responses aimed at protecting children.

### **Categories of Child Abuse and their Signs/Symptoms**

There are four main areas of Child Abuse. It should be recognised that the following suggested signs of abuse may also be a symptom of another problem.

> Neglect

Failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their environment ie food, shelter, warmth, clothing, age appropriate supervision.

> Physical neglect (e.g., failure to provide necessary food, warmth, clothing or shelter)

Lack of appropriate supervision, failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving young children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time.

> Medical Neglect

Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment, neglecting to follow through with prescribed courses of medication.

> Emotional Neglect

Inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care (attention, appropriate hugs, physical contact, etc.), or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs.

### **Indicators Of Neglect**

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Child's clothes are too small, not fit for purpose • Poor personal hygiene
- Over filling plates when eating
  
- Stealing others property
- Tired looking, physically small, 'Organic or non-organic failure to thrive'
- Parents / carers are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Low energy and motivation
- Parents / carers do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Parents / carers cannot be reached in the case of emergency
- Little future ambition (focussing on daily survival)
- Children coming ill prepared for school
- Children left at home for long periods of time (time varies depending upon age) • Parents failing to notify school of their absences.

### **Emotional Abuse - Further Defined:**

Treating a child / person in a way which deliberately undermines their confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth. Stigmatising, discriminating or humiliating a child based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, language, physicality, intellect, Name calling, humiliation, sarcasm directed at the child

### **Indicators of Psychological/ Emotional Abuse**

- Child is quiet or withdrawn
- Socially isolated avoids interactions with the community • Child appears depressed
- Loss of appetite

- Sudden loss of motivation for school or activities • Mood swings
- Changes in behaviour
- Angry outburst
- Avoids eye contact
- Unwillingness to try new things
- Avoidance of people, places, situations • Sleep problems
- Signs of anxiety
- Obsessions or phobias
- Attention needing behaviours
- Tiredness
- Seeking inappropriate relationships

### **Physical Abuse - Further Defined:**

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death.
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning.
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering.
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy.
- Exposing the child to toxic, injurious or corrosive substances.
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.
- Assault or injuries sustained during involvement in domestic violence between parents or carers.
- Physical bullying.

### **Indicators Of Physical Abuse**

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colours)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand) • Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Broken bones, bruises in unusual places, twist injuries (younger children)

Please note some physical disciplining of children is used in Oman. Parents are likely to be charged with child abuse if the child is significantly injured as a result of excessive force. At RGS Muscat the physical disciplining of students is never acceptable.

### **Sexual Abuse Further Defined**



Committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy. Intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene, medical or child care purposes.

Sexual acts that are reasonably considered beyond the age, physical development or understanding of the child. Sexual acts perpetrated by a person in a position of trust regardless of consent.

Sexual acts perpetrated against another in the manner of bullying. A person being intimidated into performing a sexual act.

Sexual harassment.

### **Indicators Of Sexual Abuse**

- Sexual behaviour or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns (e.g. too close physically or emotionally)
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home, school, dorm and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy
- Extremely protective parenting
- Refusing to eat certain foods or eat in front of people
- Promiscuity or touch aversion/sexual touching from child /different sexual boundaries
- Adults feel sexually uncomfortable with child's behaviour or language
- Dressing down and personal hygiene issues
- Socially guarded, withdrawn, self-protecting
- Not wanting to be alone
- Non age appropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Abrupt behaviour changes.

### **Grooming Behaviours In Abusers**

In the event of physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect the abuse is often perpetrated as part of a bullying or neglectful organisation or family culture. Physical abuse in particular is usually triggered by anger, frustration or other high expressed emotion. Typically the event is not premeditated or planned. Sexual abuse is different.

Whilst sexual abuse can be opportunistic, it most commonly requires planning and intent. The process of preparing a child for sexual exploitation is called grooming. Grooming behaviours function to elicit trust from the child whilst creating a climate within the organisation which reduces the abusers chances of detection or being reported. Grooming behaviours also often create a climate which makes it harder for the victim to report when they want the abuse to stop (either through guilt, shame, threats, menaces, blackmail, loss of relationship etc.) Sexual abuse requires far more

secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is often more difficult to notice and report for colleagues and victims.

Where there are situations of sexual abuse between children, similar behaviours and patterns can be found. Abuse is more likely to occur during unstructured and unsupervised periods and areas, such as bathrooms, toilets, bed rooms, bedtimes, play times, during times and in areas when staff are distracted or busy, during staff meetings, when all or the majority of staff/adults are unavailable.

### **Grooming Of Organisations**

In sexual abuse cases the behaviour of the abuser tends to be more secretive and insidious in nature. Typically, an abuser will 'groom' the child(ren) and the organisation over a period of time. Often when pedophilia or abuse is exposed it is often a member of staff who has been considered beyond reproach which makes it harder for colleagues and victims to report.

The grooming of organisations often involves the abuser in fostering personal friendships with key people. This strategy serves as a self-protection mechanism for the abuser, making it harder for people to raise concerns. Grooming behaviours with children often involves the adult developing a 'special' relationship with a child. This relationship gradually changes in nature as the adult elicits trust or fear in the child which prevents them from telling. Sometimes the nature of the attention is enjoyed by the child creating confusion around intimacy and boundaries.

### **Warning Signs**

- Staff who have developed a 'special' relationship with one particular child
- Secretive behaviours e.g. walks, meetings, out of hours, private classrooms / offices etc
- Staff who buy gifts for a particular child to the exclusion of others
- Inviting children to staff homes / spending the night (unauthorised or regularly)
- Mildly convincing reasons for inviting children to staff home e.g. help with tuition
- Child's demeanour changes in the presence of a particular adult
- A child receiving different treatment to other children
- Intimate touch or body language
- Intimate words used by adult or child toward each other or in conversation with others
- Children bragging about or name calling about a particular adult
- Leaving notes or drawing for others to see (attempts at whistleblowing).

Note: In an International School it is normal to invite children and their peers to staff homes for play dates, social time, sleep overs etc. with their own children. This is different to inviting children to the houses of single staff or couples who do not have children of the child's age.

In terms of staff protection if a circumstance arises where a child is visiting your home in circumstances that could appear odd to an objective outside observer – seek authorisation and permission first.

## **Myths And Realities Of Child Abuse (Source: Save The Children)**

**Myth:** Child abuse is carried out by strangers.

**Fact:** Research indicates that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and is committed by individuals known to the child. E.g. parents, baby sitters, teachers, family friends, carers.

**Myth:** Learning about child protection is harmful to your children.

**Fact:** Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to respond better to dangerous situations.

**Myth:** Abuse/ Self Protection education is sex education.

**Fact:** It is more about learning personal safety which prepares students to develop skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from bullying, harassment and other forms of exploitation.

**Myth:** Abuse is a matter of culture; physical or sexual abuse falls within the norms of some cultures and is acceptable.

**Fact:** The reality is that there no excuse for child abuse! No culture supports harming children.

**Myth:** Child abuse is a result of poverty and happens in low socio-economic circumstances.

**Fact:** Research indicates that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural sectors of society.

**Myth:** Children do not sexually abuse other children

**Fact:** Abuse happens between children. The likelihood is increased in emotionally impoverished environments where children are more likely to resort to self-soothing (sexual behaviour), sexual intimidation or harassment of others or engage in power dynamics such as the bullying of others. (Low adult to child ratios increase the likelihood of these behaviours occurring due to lack of available nurturing attention and supervision).

**Myth:** International Schools do not have to report abuse to local authorities.

**Fact:** International schools are bound by the laws of the host country and as such international schools must be knowledgeable and compliant with the child protection laws in their locale. Furthermore, international schools are legally and ethically liable for any violation of existing laws related to reporting of cases of abuse or neglect; there are cases now pending where schools are facing legal

action in regard to non-reporting. International Schools have a responsibility to protect their own children as well as to take measures to prevent future abuses. For this reason if a staff member is found to have abused a child they will be reported to the CIS and possibly their consulate to prevent abuses of further children.

### **Abuse awareness - An International School context**

Staff are often more transient and international than most mainstream national schools which makes recruitment and reference checking more difficult. This creates a potential vulnerability in the safeguarding systems.

Several countries do not provide police checking services and other countries only provide domestic checks. This means that abusive staff members can potentially move to another school with relative impunity creating another vulnerability for future schools. Our responsibility to check new staff and report abuses to CIS help protect our own and future children.

International school communities tend to have more families that move often and are separated from their extended families in their home-of-record. When abuse is within the family, the transient life-style then increases the risk to international school students who tend not to have access to consistent outside resources, and therefore cannot get help.

As an International School we have a responsibility to ensure our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are as robust as we can make them.

### **Guiding Principles**

Dealing with Safe School and Safeguarding issues requires some guiding principles. Cases are invariably different and each case is unique. Even the best and most thorough guidance cannot legislate for the individual circumstances of every case. For this reason guiding principles assist the process of thinking and decision making when considering good safeguarding choices.

### **Confidentiality**

Due to the sensitive nature of child welfare for staff, students and stakeholders confidentiality must be maintained. Those involved in investigations or procedures should be kept to a minimum. People with support roles should be those who are not connected to the case or the investigation. Staff supporting individual children do not need to know and should not seek to know intimate details of the case. In some cases key staff may be called upon to provide extra support to a child in their role as a caring adult. If a child makes a disclosure they need to be informed clearly who information will be passed to. Clear guidelines on confidentiality vs duty to report are essential for all staff in the event of a disclosure of abuse.

## **Protection**

The emphasis in all investigations and actions is the protection of the child. The child needs to be protected from further potential abuse and measures taken to safeguard the child e.g. suspension of staff, restriction of visitor access to school etc. Staff, students and parents should understand this type of action as a protective measure and not a disciplinary measure or assumption of guilt. A clear and fair process also aims to protect the staff member by ensuring an objective investigation is carried out and a fair process followed. Trust in the system is highly important as a protective factor because a system that is perceived as unfair or punitive will affect people's willingness to report and create its own vulnerabilities.

## **Best interests of the child**

In child welfare cases there are often several stakeholders with conflicting priorities. Decisions and processes should at all times be conducted with the best interests of the child in mind.

## **Child Centred planning**

Planning and processes need to be child centred at all times. The child's wishes need to be taken into consideration and their welfare must be considered paramount throughout the process.

## **Accountability and responsibility**

A whole school approach is essential for effective safeguarding. Everyone is accountable and responsible for reporting, whistle blowing, safe practice, safeguarding, reflecting etc. Roles and responsibilities will differ at various points of the process. Good governance is required and clear transparent processes are essential.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES: Dissemination / Awareness-raising**

Safe School training will be mandatory staff training. All staff, children and parents need to be made aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and where to find it. Safe School information should be displayed in a clear format using words and imagery which is understandable to all stakeholders.

All staff should be trained in how to log concerns/incidents on the Wellbeing Manager in Education

New staff should receive Safe School training during their Induction Program. Safe School training should include all staff members who have contact with children ideally including Security, Maintenance, Food Services etc.

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New staff should receive Safe School training during their Induction Program. Safe School training should include all staff members who have contact with children ideally including Security, Maintenance, Food Services etc.

To help ensure accountability all current staff, volunteers and internship students should be given a personal copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and sign a 'Declaration of Acceptance'. As a protective measure new staff should sign the declaration prior to employment.

An anonymous system of reporting to the DPCP should be available for students, parents and staff in the school using either a confidential line, e-mail or other information technology based facilities.

Cyberbullying and online exploitation policy needs to be developed and awareness encouraged for students, staff and parents.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Recruitment and selection of staff and others must reflect RGS Muscats commitment to safeguard children by ensuring checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children. This should include following up references with phone calls, accounting for gaps in employment history and not employing people who cannot account for gaps. Requesting a police check from staff who come from countries who can provide checks. Ensuring staff sign a 'Safe Schools Declaration of Acceptance' prior to starting work. Ensure new staff receive Safe School training prior to their employment.

## **BUILDING CHILD SAFEGUARDING INTO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

Safe School Policy must be incorporated into all existing systems and processes that have any bearing on the safeguarding of children so that an environment is established where the rights of children are respected and where abuse in any form is not tolerated.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should be reflected in all human resource and management arrangements that define or determine how staff and other representatives carry out their work, including job descriptions, performance management systems, behaviour management procedures and staff disciplinary procedures.

Children and their parents are made aware of the systems that exist to raise a concern or a complaint.

Where RGS Muscat is responsible for providing activities or services for children, pre-planning will ensure risks are identified and plans in place to manage those risks. When RGS Muscat uses external agencies e.g. field trips, we will carry out due diligence to ensure the organisation concerned is qualified to the level required for their activities

Engagement with children and their carers for the purposes of marketing should not exploit the child or carer, nor increase their vulnerability, or place them at risk.

All activities, especially activities involving staff, visitors or parents having direct contact with individuals or groups of children must be assessed to make sure that any child safeguarding risks are identified and adequate controls developed.

## **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Staff, parents and students should be supported to develop child safeguarding skills, knowledge and experience appropriate to their role in the organisation.

Safe School awareness training will be mandatory and include induction training and mandatory refresher training for all staff.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Guidance is required which governs the appropriate use of information and communication technologies such as the internet, websites, social networking sites, etc. to ensure that children are not put at risk and aware of the risks. This guidance should cover staff and children who utilise the technologies. Awareness of cybercrime and online safety measures implemented where children have access to information technologies for staff and children.

Ensure vigilance and consistency in dorms and all other areas of school regarding access to books, magazines, films and materials, (hard copies or online) that are reasonably considered to be harmful, pornographic or beyond the child's age and stage of development.

## **AUDIT AND REVIEW**

Each department should review their policies following Safe School training to ensure they reflect current guidance. Policy review should occur on a minimum 3 yearly cycle.

## **CREATING A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

The creation of a protective environment requires the commitment of every staff member, parent and partner. It is not the job of one person or a select group of people.

## **STAFF PROTECTION**

A common concern for staff is the fear of being subject to a false allegation. For this reason it is especially important that staff have trust in the system that not only takes measures to protect children but also protects staff by responding fairly and objectively to concerns that are raised.

A thorough investigation aims to screen out false allegations by cross checking witness accounts, times, dates and staff / student movements. Often false allegations lose credibility due to lack of a cohesive timeline. This is generally not true of real issues.

### **Staff vulnerability**

Several staff who have found themselves in difficult situations in other organisations have often allowed themselves to be compromised by either placing themselves at risk or through a degree of naivety.

Awareness of personal and professional boundaries is a good start as well as being aware of what might be a situation that could be misconstrued by others. It is a good idea to be aware of grooming behaviours so that these situations and boundary transgressions can be proactively avoided.

The following are some key areas taken from the Professional Charter.

- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- As far as possible, be visible in working with children

**In general, it is inappropriate to:**

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Buy gifts for a child to the exclusion of others.

**Staff and others must never:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

**Staff and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:**

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner or dress in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised or without permission
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive

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- Tell racist, sexist or other discriminatory jokes
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

If you find yourself in a position where you will potentially leave yourself vulnerable, protect yourself by ensuring you notify a Senior Staff member and get permission.

Note: In an International School it is normal and acceptable for staff children to play socially together, have playdates and sleepovers with their friends. This should be encouraged as part of the child's normal social development. There is a significant difference between what can reasonably be seen as social interaction between children and families and situations that compromise a professional boundary.

### **Child Protection Procedure: Safe School Reporting Process**

If you have cause to suspect abuse or have any other Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns all staff, students, parents or other stakeholders have a duty to report without delay. Furthermore if you observe an indicator of abuse, receive a disclosure of abuse or an allegation of abuse or if you have knowledge which causes you to believe harm may be occurring **Child Centred planning**

Planning and processes need to be child centred at all times. The child's wishes need to be taken into consideration and their welfare must be considered paramount throughout the process.

### **Accountability and responsibility**

A whole school approach is essential for effective safeguarding. Everyone is accountable and responsible for reporting, whistle blowing, safe practice, safeguarding, reflecting etc. Roles and responsibilities will differ at various points of the process. Good governance is required and clear transparent processes are essential.

### **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES: Dissemination / Awareness-raising**

Safe School training will be mandatory staff training. All staff, children and parents need to be made aware of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and where to find it. Safe School information should be displayed in a clear format using words and imagery which is understandable to all stakeholders.

All staff should be trained in how to log concerns/incidents on the Wellbeing Manager in ISAMS.

New staff should receive Safe School training during their Induction Program. Safe School training should include all staff members who have contact with children ideally including Security, Maintenance, Food Services etc.

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To help ensure accountability all current staff, volunteers and internship students should be given a personal copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and sign a 'Declaration of Acceptance'. As a protective measure new staff should sign the declaration prior to employment.

The board needs to ratify / endorse the policy and sign a 'Declaration of Acceptance'.

An anonymous system of reporting to the DPCP should be available for students, parents and staff in the school using either a confidential line, e-mail or other information technology based facilities.

The number for Child-Line 15999 (Malaysian Royal Police) should be displayed for students and staff. Students need an awareness of child welfare and personal safety delivered through PSHE classes.

Cyberbullying and online exploitation policy needs to be developed and awareness encouraged for students, staff and parents.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Recruitment and selection of staff and others must reflect Stonyhurst's commitment to safeguard children by ensuring checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to work with children. This should include following up references with phone calls, accounting for gaps in employment history and not employing people who cannot account for gaps. Requesting a police check from staff who come from countries who can provide checks. Ensuring staff sign a 'Safe Schools Declaration of Acceptance' prior to starting work. Ensure new staff receive Safe School training prior to their employment.

## **BUILDING CHILD SAFEGUARDING INTO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

Safe School Policy must be incorporated into all existing systems and processes that have any bearing on the safeguarding of children so that an environment is established where the rights of children are respected and where abuse in any form is not tolerated.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should be reflected in all human resource and management arrangements that define or determine how staff and other representatives carry out their work, including job descriptions, performance management systems, behaviour management procedures and staff disciplinary procedures.

Children and their parents are made aware of the systems that exist to raise a concern or a complaint.

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- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
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### **Child Protection Procedure: Safe School Reporting Process**

If you have cause to suspect abuse or have any other Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns all staff, students, parents or other stakeholders have a duty to report without delay. Furthermore if you observe an indicator of abuse, receive a disclosure of abuse or an allegation of abuse or if you have knowledge which causes you to believe harm may be occurring you have a duty to report to the DPCP without delay.

If you receive information which is 'child protection' in nature but you doubt its credibility you still have a duty to report, accurately, completely and without delay. Staff who knowingly withhold information related to child safety may face disciplinary action.

### **Disclosure of abuse perpetrated outside of school**

If a member of staff suspects a child has been abused or neglected by someone outside of school, the following procedures should be implemented

RGS staff will report concerns immediately to the Designated Person for Child Protection (DPCP). They will be required to record observations that will contribute to the Record of Child Protection Concern. The DPCP records all information and is responsible for keeping all records and evidence safe.

In the event of suspected sexual abuse happening, it is a requirement for the school to contact the Child Protection Service (CPS) or the Police. For cases happening within the context of the family, the family should not be alerted to the allegations being made and the report can either be made with the police or CPS. For sexual abuse cases happening outside the context of the family, the family should be informed of the incident and a report needs to be made to the CPS/Police. The school should record any disclosure factually. Note - The 'paramountcy principle' supports agencies making decisions in the best interests of the child, and this may mean not disclosing information to parents.

If there are obvious signs of harm, the student will be taken to the School Nurse immediately. If the student is in need of urgent medical attention, he/she should be taken to the Hospital. If it is not possible or advisable to obtain parent consent the CPS should be contacted for consultation. Where we suspect the abuse has occurred or is about to occur and the child is unsafe and in imminent risk of further harm, we are committed to reporting the matter to the Child Protection Service Helpline or the Police.

Where we suspect that the abuse has been perpetrated by someone close to the family or within the family network, the DPCP or a designated member of staff will contact the family and discuss ways on how the student could be kept safe and managed more appropriately. Full consideration as to whether contact with the immediate family would increase the risk of harm should be given.

### **Disclosure of alleged abuse perpetrated by a staff member**

If staff, parents or a student believes that a member of staff has behaved inappropriately with a student within or out with the school the following steps should be taken:

Meeting with Student/Alleged Victim - With the Safeguarding Committee present, the DPCP or Principal will communicate with the student/s directly. If there is more than one student who has been a victim of abuse, the students will be interviewed individually. A summary of what was learned from investigations will be made by the DPCP on Form 2.

The DPCP or Principal will coordinate interviews with any bystanders/witnesses

Meeting with Accused Staff Member - The accused staff member will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal and DPCP and questioned regarding the accusations being made. The meeting will be documented. Notes from this meeting will be recorded on the Form 2.

Contacting Parent/Caregivers- Parents/Caregivers of the student/s being questioned will be contacted by telephone by the Principal or DPCP and informed of the meetings that took place. The alleged victim's parents will be invited into school to discuss the issue face to face.

Consideration will be given as to whether that member of staff should face suspension pending further investigations.

Communication with Child Protection Agency - Principal will report the matter to Child Protection Services Helpline or the Police after careful consideration of the seriousness of offence is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also. The Principal/DPCP will keep those directly concerned with the case up to date with developments.

### **Disclosure of Abuse by Another Student**

If a student in the school is suspected of abusing another student, the following steps should all take place within the school day.

Initial Record of Concern - The adult who has suspicions of a student being abused by another child, or is approached directly by a student/s about being abused, completes a written statement, and handed it to the DPCP. The Head of School should be informed by the DPCP.

Meeting with Victim/s – The Principal will meet with the victim directly. In the case of more than one victim, children will be interviewed individually and a summary of what was learned from investigations will be made.

Meeting with Bystanders - The DPCP and/or Principal will communicate with possible witnesses individually to the abuse that has occurred.

Meeting with Accused Student/s – The DPCP or Principal will communicate with the student accused of causing abuse to a fellow student or students. If there is more than one student who has taken part in an incident involving the abuse of other students, the students accused will be met individually. Notes from this meeting will be recorded and coordinated by the DPCP.

Consultation - Consultation and agreement between the Principal and DPCP. Parents of Accused Student/s Contacted – If abuse by student/s proves to be beyond doubt, the student/s are collected from wherever they are on the school campus and asked to bring their bags to the school office. The parents / caregivers of student/s accused of abuse towards another student/s will be telephoned to attend a meeting with the Principal before being asked to take their child/children home for the rest of the day. An offer of counselling for their child will be made.

Parents of Victims Contacted – Parents/Caregivers of the student/s who were abused will be contacted by telephone by the Principal and informed of the meetings that took place. The course of action will be explained regarding the student/s who carried out the abuse on their child and an offer of counselling for their child made.

Action - The Principal will be committed to taking action. In extreme cases, expulsions will be considered. Further consequences including an apology letter to victim/s and exclusion from upcoming events will be considered.

Communication with Child Protection Agency - The Principal may report the matter to Child Protection Service Helpline (office hours) or the Police after careful consideration of the seriousness of offence is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also.

## Training

What	Who	When
Level 1 safeguarding	All Staff, Employees, Volunteers/ External agencies, businesses, organisations and consultants	Prior to arriving in Oman Annual Induction Week  Prior to commencing work on campus/with children

Level 2 safeguarding	KS Coordinators and Heads of Lines	Term 2 (January 2024) As and when staff need it
Level 3 safeguarding	Assistant Head, Head of School	Prior to school opening (July/August 2022)

## **Managing Disclosure**

The disclosure of child abuse by a child to an adult is likely to be one of the hardest conversations that all parties will face. It is essential that we show empathy and professionalism in our approach to managing such conversations, mindful that what is said and what is recorded could influence criminal proceedings at a later date.

The following professional guidelines protect both the child and the person who is receiving the disclosure: -

**No Promise of Confidentiality** - Staff should never give students or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know.

**Listen Without Judgement** - Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning, leading or stopping them. On no account should a pupil be asked to demonstrate the abuse. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a social worker, police officer or other specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.

**Take Notes** - Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupils' own words and pass it to the DCPC for the school.

**Empathy** - Remember that it may be very traumatic for a pupil to recall and describe events.

**Next Steps** - When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.

**Professional** - stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.

## **Record Keeping**

Initial concerns or issues will be logged on ISAMS through the Wellbeing Manager system. All members of academic staff will be able to use Wellbeing Manager to log concerns. The DPCP will have access to all concerns and logs.

The safeguarding concern form (Form 1) will be used by staff to identify initial concerns. Staff will complete a form and send it to the school office in a sealed envelope.

The DPCP should use Form 2 to record all information concerning a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse. All prior notes should be attached to this document. Form 2 should contain facts regarding the issue, the actions the school took and the actions the school decided not to take with explanation.

All records of Child Protection allegations, suspicions, or disclosures are centrally kept by the DPCP – both electronic ('At Risk Register' which is password protected) and hard file copy (double locked).

### **Intimate Care Procedures**

If a young child needs the assistance of an adult to change their underwear or remove their underclothes due to wetting themselves or to investigate an injury, it must be done in accordance with our EYFS Intimate Care Policy.

### **Sharing a concern about Staff (Whistleblowing)**

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Staff may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or may fear subsequent harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need staff to safeguard their welfare in good faith.

### **APPENDIX 1: Record of Child Protection Concern - Form 1**

To be completed by the reporting person with any other attached notes for reference. Head of Pastoral to file in alphabetical order (surname) under 2 locks.

### **RGS Muscat School Safe School Form**

Name of Student	
Tutor Group	
Being reported by	
Date and time	
Location	
Details/Observations/Incident	

**Please submit this completed form directly to the Assistant Principal or the Principal as soon as possible.**

**Alternatively, place the completed form in a sealed envelope addressed 'URGENT: Safeguarding lead' and give it to the office staff.**

