



Quest International College

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Agreed by the board of governors	
Date of approval	
Date for review	

1.0 Introduction and rationale

Quest International College recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding young people and protecting them from harm. Keeping children safe and free from harm is the school's highest priority.

These people at the school are appointed as designated safeguarding leads (DSL's).

Principal Ms Nikitta

School counsellor Dr Hakim

Head of health and safety Dr Pishtivan

These roles and names are displayed prominently around the school.

In addition, support is available at the ministry in Iraqi Kurdistan:

National child line Helpline 116

Harassment & domestic violence 119

2.0 Policy Statement This policy has been approved by the board of governors. It is available to parents on request and is published on the school website. The policy is reviewed annually, and the date of review and approval is stated at the end of the policy document.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at QIC. The policy applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils, this may be on or off-site, at an activity centre or on an educational visit.

QIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, parents, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment.

3.0 Defining safeguarding and child protection

3.1 What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the policies and practices that the school follows to keep children ¹ and adults safe and promote their well-being. Safeguarding includes procedures such as recruitment and training of staff, recognising the signs of abuse, and ensuring that all staff are aware of legislation and safe practices.

All staff at QIC staff receive annual training in safeguarding and child protection whilst DSL's receive specific and a higher level of training for their roles.

Safeguarding is defined as preventing harm to a child's health and/or development. Safeguarding aims to protect children from abuse and maltreatment, to ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care and to take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes. This is aligned to the United Nations convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) and supports the work of the NCPA. The UK DfE Keeping children safe in education 2024 (Department for education, 2024) document is also referenced as evidence of best practice.

3.2 What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is part of safeguarding practice. Child protection is the activity that is undertaken to protect children who are likely to suffer harm or already suffering significant harm. Child protection are the actions that are taken to protect children. These may be children who have already experienced harm, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or are identified as *at risk of harm*.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and everyone at QIC that has contact with children on roll at the school, now referred to as students, must demonstrate compliance with this responsibility and this policy.

4.0 Identifying different forms of child abuse

Abuse is a form of harm. There are five categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and mental health. If a child is experiencing abuse, it is most likely that they are experiencing more than one form of abuse. They are defined to enable where a student or a group of students may be at risk of harm.

4.1 Physical abuse

¹ children includes everyone under the age of 18 and also includes students registered at the school who are 18+ years.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child. Physical abuse includes any acts that deliberately harm a child that have no medical basis, such as female genital mutilation (FGM)

4.2 Psychological and Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or young adults emotional development or mental health. It may involve conveying to children or young adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. It may feature age – or developmentally – inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning for young adults or preventing participation in normal age-appropriate social interaction.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone. This includes being exposed to domestic violence.

Bullying and cyberbullying are forms of abuse that may include both emotional and physical abuse. The school's antibullying policy promotes a zero tolerance to bullying in any form and should be read alongside this policy.

4.3 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate carers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4.4 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They

may include non- contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

5.0 Other potential areas of risk to students

5.1 Online Safety

See the schools policy on the use of mobile phones, e-safety, safe use of social media and cyber bullying.

There are 4 main areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.

Commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

5.2 Radicalisation

See the schools policy on attendance procedures, primary and secondary curriculum policy and staff handbook.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Secondary school staff will receive training to help to identify signs of radicalisation and extremism when appropriate. The school adopts the UK government definition of extremism: vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Staff will ensure that they promote best practice in international schools to prevent students from being radicalised. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable our students to discuss relevant issues of the day.

Teaching staff through the curriculum and PHSE will promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. They will encourage respect for other people, encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

5.3 Child on Child Abuse

See the schools antibullying policy, behaviour policy and students code of conduct

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. Child on Child abuse can take many forms, including:

- Physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling.
- Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse such as inappropriate sexual language, touching or sexual assault.
- Consensual/non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (previously known as sexting) including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content;
- Teenage relationship abuse, which can be defined as 'a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner '

- Initiation/hazing/ragging, used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials;
- Prejudiced behaviour, which are a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

6.0 Our approach to safeguarding and child protection:

Prevention through the promotion of a positive school atmosphere, trained staff, pastoral support and appropriate supervision;

Protection by effective policy implementation and safer recruitment procedures;

Support for any students who may have been abused.

7.0 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The school will appoint annually designated safeguarding leads (DSL's) to prevent, protect and support students at the school.

The role of the DSL is to effectively and consistently promote the safeguarding and child protection of students at the school through the effective implementation of this policy.

They are responsible for:

- promoting and effectively implementing the safeguarding and child protection policy with all stakeholders;
- ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding and child protection training annually
- maintain accurate records of staff who have completed safeguarding and child protection training
- recording and maintaining confidential records of safeguarding and child protection concerns brought to their attention;
- reporting allegations against staff, volunteers or directors immediately to the principal or chair of governors;
- working with parents, pastoral staff, outside agencies and making referrals to child protection agencies (NCPA) where appropriate;
- updating the chair of governors, principal and heads of school informed of any child protection issues that arise;
- ensure that a single central record is in place that details the suitability of staff and volunteers who work at the school, and this is regularly updated and reviewed

- support transition arrangements for students where there may be child protection concerns
- ensure that the schools policy is available to parents and on the school website
- maintain effective links with relevant agencies and attend child protection conferences as and when required
- Ensure all staff/temporary/volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguard Lead
- Keep detailed records of concerns about young people, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately; documenting and collating information on individual young people to support early identification, referral and actions to safeguard

8.0 Procedures for Reporting a Concern

It is never OK to do nothing.

If you have a concern or a doubt about a student's welfare you must raise it with the DSL.

- Do not start your own investigation
- Do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a written record of concern and hand this directly to the DSL
- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call the DSL

or call 119 helpline

If you suspect a pupil is at risk of harm you must act. The student's behaviour may have changed, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff should try to give the student the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL. **The key here is that if in doubt, you must make the referral directly to the DSL**

If a pupil makes a disclosure to you;

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and collected – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – I’m so sorry this has happened,
- Not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened,
- Tell the pupil that in order to help them, you will find someone who can help them and pass the information on
- Tell the pupil what will happen next. That you will pass the information on confidentially to someone who can help.
- Report verbally to the DSL as soon as possible and they write a note, sign and date this and pass to DSL
- Seek support from the DSL if you feel distressed.

8.2 Notifying parents, carers and the appropriate authorities

The DSL will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL may contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

The DSL and the principal may reserve the right to deal with the matter internally if this is in the best interests of the student.

Where the student may be considered at serious risk of harm the DSL or school principal reserves the right to raise concerns directly with the appropriate authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan.

9.0 Staff Training is a key part of the effective implementation of this policy. Therefore, the school agrees to uphold

- Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads, and key pastoral staff appropriate to their role **every two years**.
- **All staff receive annual child protection training**
- All new staff must complete child protection training on appointment
- All teaching and assistant teachers will receive regular updates from the DSL as part of the schools CPD programme
- All admin staff or any member of staff who is in regular contact with students will receive annual training

- All local staff will be provided with training in first language where required
- Admin and relevant staff will be trained in safer recruitment processes in accordance with best practice as outlined in UK DfE '*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024*'

10.0 Allegations against members of staff

Allegations made about a member of staff causing harm to a student should be raised directly with the principal immediately or in their absence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If an allegation is made against a Designated Safeguarding Lead or principal, this should be shared with the chair of the board of directors or a governor of the chair is unavailable.

10.1 Avoiding false allegations

Teachers and other members of staff must protect themselves by being aware that actions or comments can sometimes be misinterpreted.

Reference staff code of conduct, staff handbook, and guidance on working alone.

At all times staff must:

- follow the staff code of conduct and maintain appropriate professional behaviours both in school and out of school.
- Avoid working alone with a student. Ensure working spaces are visible, public and can be seen and heard by others.
- Avoid travelling alone with students. Do not transport children your car
- Communicate with pupils by organisational email. (No other forms, such as social media or wats app messages are appropriate)

This policy should be read alongside all policies related to the health, safety and welfare of students at the school.

Attendance Procedures;
 Anti-bullying Policy;
 Behaviour Policy;
 First aid policy;
 Health and safety policy
 Staff handbook
 CCTV policy
 Written risk assessments policy;

Safer Recruitment Procedures.

Secondary Relationship and Sex Education Policy;

Data Protection, Cyber Security, social media and e-Safety Policy;

Residential Visits Policy.