

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Under 18s)

Policy Statement

The Suzanne Sparrow Language School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, vulnerable adults and young people. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). The term “vulnerable adult” refers to any person aged 18 years and over who is unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

A1. The school welcomes students from the age of 12 years upwards and offers homestay accommodation with carefully selected homestay providers.

All staff at the school and the main homestay providers must undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which is renewed every 3 years. All homestays are visited by a Student Support Officer on a biennial basis.

A2. All adults working with the children will abide by the policy. The term “Safeguarding” refers to “looking after” children, whilst “child protection refers to “protecting children from direct harmful behaviour”.

The Designated Safeguarding Person oversees the recording systems for DBS checks and the training of academic and non- academic staff on Safeguarding matters. The school also has a Welfare Officer.

A3 The school is committed to protecting all students from harm and takes particular care to ensure that all students under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults are adequately protected.

A4. The policy is for all under 18's, whatever race or gender as everyone has the entitlement to be protected.

A5. All adults who read this policy will be expected to accept and carry out the guidelines set down. They must be vigilant and know to report any concerns or allegations and who to contact within and outside the school.

A6. Other Associated Policies include the Code of Conduct, Anti Bullying Policy, Students with Learning Difficulties and Disability Policy.

A7. The Principal will be responsible for reviewing the policy on an annual basis

A8. The DSP and Welfare Office (school office) will be responsible for delivering the policy and in any absence the Director of Studies will assume this role.

A9. Under 18's will be involved in feedback on the policy through meetings with group leaders to ensure best practice with any updates.

A10. The statutory guidance used in writing this document were:
English UK Guidelines
Childrens Acts 1989 and 2004
Local Government Act 2000
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014

Code of Conduct

B1. To create a safe culture within the school both adults and Under 18s will be protected by the Policies and Code of Conduct which staff and students must adhere to at all times.

B2. Staff must be aware that the Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that any person in a Position of Trust engaged in sexual activity of any sort with students under the age of 18 is breaking the law (even though legal age of consent is 16).

B3 All employees of the school are responsible for exercising care in relation to themselves and others who may be affected by their actions.

The school maintains a work environment for staff and a learning environment for students in which honesty, integrity and respect must be constantly reflected in personal behaviour and standards of conduct.

Staff are aware that they must act as excellent role models at all times and have respect for diversity and promote equality whilst working as part of a whole school team.

B4. To protect both U18s and adults working with them, the school sets clear boundaries and guidelines:

Physical contact between adults and U18s is not acceptable except in special cases ie when medical assistance is required.

Appropriate language must be used at all times.

Socialising with U18's outside of school is discouraged but must follow the same rules as during work time ensuring nobody becomes involved in a situation which could be misunderstood.

B5. Adults working with U18's should dress appropriately and be aware of the effect their appearance could have if they do not present themselves appropriately.

B6. The school operates a zero tolerance policy on the misuse or supply of drugs on its premises. Students are informed of UK drug legislation at their orientation session and all staff are made aware of the importance of educating U18's about addictive substances ie smoking or drinking. The breaking of any of the rules regarding drugs may lead to disciplinary procedures and police intervention.

B7. The school has a strict policy on the use of IT and the Internet especially regarding contact between adult individuals and U18s (see Policy Document)

B8. The Student Support Team provides guidance for homestay providers on the importance of privacy and appropriate behaviour in the environs of the bedrooms and bathrooms whilst hosting students.

B9. Taxi and Coach companies used by the school provide written confirmation that they only use drivers who have been DBS checked. Staff are advised not to use their own vehicles to transport U18s unless under special circumstances.

B10 Staff are legally obliged to inform management of any concerns about colleagues not following the Code of Conduct. Staff who report this or any other problem will not be penalised and their report will remain confidential.

Child Protection

C1. The school is committed to protecting all students from harm and takes particular care to ensure that U18s are fully protected.

The Principles of the school are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability sexuality or beliefs.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by staff and responded to with sensitivity and professionalism and in the most appropriate way to support the needs of the child – following the guidelines laid down in the School's Safeguarding Policy.
- Commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures.
- An annual review of all policies and procedures.

- Children and parents are informed of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and associated policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare ie anti-bullying policy, code of conduct, induction policy for juniors, students with learning difficulties and disability policy.

C2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Welfare Officer is Hilary Desvernay. The Designated Safeguarding Team consists of Kathryn Hawken and Rebecca Richards.

C3. Any safeguarding concerns will be responded to by the DSP and the response recorded. Responses may include monitoring, investigating, discussion with group leader/parent/agent/homestay provider or management, prior to action. The local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed if an allegation is made.

C4. The knowledge needed to recognise symptoms of abuse are part of the Level 1 training which all staff undertake. Staff are also made aware of how to respond if a child makes an allegation of abuse directly through the DSP or manager.

C5. All staff are given a copy of the Guidance on Handling a Disclosure from a Child as a student may choose to talk to any adult in the school.

C6. Secure records of any allegations of abuse or inappropriate conduct are kept by The Designated Lead in a locked cabinet for up to 5 years.

C7. If an adult is accused of inappropriate behaviour/abuse the following procedure will be carried out:
 Ensure the child is safe and supported
 Inform the senior manager immediately
 Ensure that a clear written record is made. This report is to be signed and dated by the person who made the allegation/heard the allegation from the child.
 Senior Manager or DSP to contact LCSB immediately
 No decisions must be made without referring to the LCSB

C8. The procedure for an Under 18 year old student accused of inappropriate behaviour or abuse is:
 Report the allegation to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will make a factual report of the allegation. No attempt should be made at this stage to investigate the circumstances.
 A referral should be made to the Children's Services.
 A member of the Safeguarding Team will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the welfare file.
 If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted and parents informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim).
 If appropriate the pupil being complained about may be excluded for a period of time.
 If outside bodies do not accept the complaint a thorough investigation into the matter will take place at the school.

C9. The sexual exploitation of juniors is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation can take many forms from seemingly "consensual" relationships where sex is exchanged for attention/affection to serious organised crime and child trafficking. Exploitation is marked out by an imbalance of power within the relationship. Staff are made aware of and referred to the Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation Handbook if they need any guidance on this matter.

C10. Staff are aware that Female Genital Mutilation is illegal in the UK and adults have a legal duty to report any suspicions they may have or information they are given.

Training

D1. All staff members have undergone Basic Awareness in Child Protection Training. The Student Support Team have also undergone Level 2 Safeguarding training and the DSL is responsible for ensuring all adults are trained to the correct level. The senior DSP and three senior members of staff have also been trained to Level 3.

D2. All staff receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and have undergone Basic Awareness in Child Protection Training.

Safer Recruitment

E1. The school is committed to safe recruitment of all staff and homestay providers. See Recruitment and Development Policy for Academic and Non Academic Staff. All staff and the main Homestay Provider are DBS checked by the school if they do not already have an enhanced disclosure. Overseas Group Leaders must provide signed proof that they have been similarly checked in their own country.

E2. Recruitment material for the school includes the explanation that staff will be expected to share the school's ethos and commitment to safeguarding.

E3. During interview candidates will be questioned regarding their attitudes to working with U18s

E4. Safeguarding information is provided as part of the application pack when a vacancy is advertised and all applicants offered an interview will receive this information prior to the interview. This also applies to homestay providers.

E5. If a candidate is employed prior to the DBS check being available the manager will make a judgement based on the assessment of the risk versus the consequences of the decision. This judgement will be signed off and the new employee will sign a self-declaration and their access to children will be supervised at all times.

E6. If an applicant's disclosure shows a criminal record the manager will make a judgement based on the offences which may be relevant to the job in question taking into account the seriousness, age and frequency of the offences. Verification of the record will be sought from the candidate and a decision made by at least two people. A clear record (containing details of the offences) will be made of the decision and signed by the manager.

E7. Where any applicants ie group leaders cannot obtain a criminal check the school ensures signed documentation is received from the overseas organisation ie Headmaster of the school or Director of the Agency.

E8. The HR Manager keeps and updates the Single Central Register. The Safeguarding Lead and management and support teams are trained in Safer Recruitment ensuring nothing is missed when recruiting staff, homestays and group leaders.

E10. The school does not work with students under 12 years of age.

Welfare/Implementing Safeguarding

F1. Risk assessments are produced for all activities and excursions either by the school or by the companies concerned. Particular consideration is given to safeguarding U18s in the assessments and the school ensures group leaders and teachers pass on the information to students. Supervision ratios are adhered to at all times.

F2. The ratio for U18s is 1 leader per 12 students. This may be school leaders or overseas leaders or a combination of both.

F3. Homestay providers are requested to inform the school office if a student is ill or unable to attend class. The information is passed immediately to the Director of Studies and the teacher involved. If a student is missing on an activity or excursion a group leader must remain behind until the student is found. Students' mobile numbers are kept by the overseas group leaders for emergency purposes. Homestay Providers adhere strictly to curfew times set down by overseas group leaders and/or the school and in event of curfews being ignored home stay providers are aware they must contact the overseas group leader or the school emergency phone. The emergency phone contact would then put procedures in place depending on the circumstances ie informing police if necessary.

F4. In the absence of any parents or guardians, students aged between 12 and 18 are the responsibility of the group leaders, the homestay providers and the school.

Students U18 are not allowed out in the evenings without written permission from their parents or leaders.

The curfew times set down by the school are:

12 – 13 years of age: 20.00

14 – 15 years of age: 21.00

16 – 17 years of age: 22.00

The times should be adhered to, to ensure the safety of the students. If they are not adhered to the students will not be allowed out in the evenings.

Overseas Group Leaders may request alternative curfews.

All junior students must carry ID cards, along with contact details of the school and of their homestay providers. They must all wear the wristbands provided by the school with the emergency telephone details on them.

If Juniors are placed in adult classes they are identified by the use of wristbands and their names highlighted on the class registers. These students have more contact with the Student Support Team and are offered separate relaxation areas at break and lunch times.

Further information is provided in the Student Handbook for Juniors which is sent out to Individual Juniors and their parents/guardians and overseas Group Leaders prior to their arrival.

F5. Fire Safety within the school is taken very seriously with regular fire drills. All U18 are given fire training as part of their induction on the first day by their teacher and in their own language by group leaders.

F6. The school has put into place a First Aid Policy which not only complies with the regulations but also incorporates the principle of best practise both within the school and during activities and excursions – see First Aid Policy and H & S Policy.

F7. Students are made aware of the disciplinary systems and other relevant information about the school prior to arrival through the Handbook for Juniors which is sent to the family on enrolment. The induction procedures on the first day with the Principal and/or group leaders reiterates the policies as set out in the Induction Policy for Juniors, Disciplinary Procedures – Students,

F8. The school operates a meet and greet service for unaccompanied minors at the airport through a local taxi company. We also operate a ferry escort service in the summer months on the Plymouth/Roscoff ferry crossing for unaccompanied minors. This service is run by staff who have all had Enhanced DBS checks and safeguarding training. Adults are informed of this service when making enquiries about bookings.

F9. Students are educated during their induction about being safe online, not believing all they read, not sharing personal data or photos with people they don't know. Internet usage is protected through Parental Control and students must adhere to the rules for internet usage. A supportive approach enables students to tell adults if they receive any unwanted contact online or via text.

F10. Provision is made for any students who are more vulnerable eg physical disabilities or those requiring more help with personal care or coming from a difficult home situation. The Safeguarding Team are trained to ensure vulnerable students are placed in a suitable homestay and that they are identified at the school to the Health and Safety Officer and that facilities required are available ie wheelchair ramps etc.

F11. Private Fostering is when a student aged under 16 (or 18 if disabled) stays with a homestay provider for more than 27 nights. The Safeguarding Support Team reports this to the local authority, social services at least 6 weeks before the arrangements starts so the social services are able to visit the homestay and ensure all is in order.

Please also refer to the following Policies:

Data Protection Policy

Privacy Statement

Updated September 2018

