

Whole School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Berlin Brandenburg International School (BBIS) strives to create an environment in which its students are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. The care and safety of our students is always paramount.

In order to achieve this, two Child Protection and Safeguarding (CPS) Officers are appointed and two CPS Teams have been established to serve our community, one for the Primary School and one for Secondary School. The Secondary School CPS Team is responsible for the Boarding School. Each CPS Core Team is made up of the CPS Chair (Head of Student Support Services), a CPS Officer and a School Nurse. The extended CPS Team includes the relevant section principal, school counsellor and when required, a member of the teaching staff to ensure a suitable male/female ratio.

The team will include a competent German speaker. The CPS Team is responsible for managing and overseeing all CPS referrals and liaising with the necessary external agencies.

Furthermore BBIS will:

Screen all employees and volunteers

All applicants for work within the school, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked about their suitability to work with students and must provide at least three references. All such references will be followed up by telephone and, from the most recent employer a request to confirm in writing that *“I neither know nor suspect any reason why [teacher’s name] should not have substantial unsupervised access to children”*.

A police clearance (Polizeiliches Führungszeugnis) will be required of all applicants and employees and will need to be renewed every three years.

In case applicants have unexplained gaps in their employment history, or have moved frequently from one job to another, explanations will be sought.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the school administration is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with students.

Seek and supply information and training

BBIS will seek out ongoing training opportunities for all adults involved in the school to ensure that they are aware of all symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. CPS training opportunities will be provided annually, either internally or externally.

Prevent abuse by means of good practice

A CPS Staff Training Pack will be provided to all staff.

The CPS policy and the “Students First - CPS Guidelines - A Staff Code of Conduct for Protective Practices” (See CPS Policy Appendices No. 1) will be distributed to all staff who will be required to sign to confirm that they both understand and accept their professional obligation in reporting CPS concerns and that they will be expected to operate within appropriate professional boundaries, especially when students are in their care.

Students will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence with adult support, through the PSHE, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula, in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable students to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

Responding and reporting suspicions of abuse

Reported suspicions and/or change in student’s behaviour/ appearance such as incontinence, bruises, sudden aggression or withdrawal, will be recorded on a CPS Referral Form (See CPS Policy Appendices No. 2) and reported to the CPS Team for review.

The CPS Team will, in the vast majority of cases, be the first point of reference for any concerns. Concerns will be referred in writing to a CPS Officer or in the officer’s absence the CPS Chair using the CPS Referral Form. This must be done within 24 hours. Email or other electronic media must not be used for reasons of data protection. An exception to this would occur when acute and imminent concerns for student safety arise and where immediate steps must be taken. The reporting member of staff must remain with the student until an appropriate professional (School Counsellor, CPS Officer or Principal) assumes responsibility for the child or young person.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept strictly confidential, shared only with those who need to know and where applicable, including external agencies.

Keep records

CPS Referral forms will be kept separate from the usual ongoing academic records of progress and development.

Whenever a CPS referral form is completed, the record will include: the name, address and age of the child; timed and dated observations describing objectively the child's behavior/appearance without comment or interpretation; the dated name and signature of the recorder. In the case of a direct disclosure the exact words spoken by the child will also be included.

The CPS Referral Forms will be securely kept in a separate CPS file and will not be accessible to staff in the school other than the CPS Core Team members and, only in case of imminent danger, the director.

Contact with other organizations

BBIS cooperates within the Potsdam Mittelmark CPS Network Agreement and our designated external CPS Expert/Kinderschutzfachkraft is the EJV e.V. in Teltow (See CPS Appendices 3). BBIS is able to seek anonymous and impartial advice, where concerns arise.

BBIS operates in accordance with German law and best practice both locally and within the international school community. On direct instruction from our designated external CPS Expert/Kinderschutzfachkraft, school concerns and confidential records will be shared with the appropriate authorities, such as the district children's and young people's welfare office (Jugendamt). In the case of acute concerns for student safety, the school will contact the necessary authorities (Police and or Jugendamt) directly.

If a report on a student is to be made to the authorities, the student's parents will only be informed at the same time the report is made if the authorities recommend this step.

The school will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority, including names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual caseworker, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency, for the school and the local authorities to work well together.

Records will be kept of local CPS support agencies or other contacts as appropriate.

Support for families

BBIS will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the school.

Where abuse at home is suspected, BBIS will continue to welcome the student and family while investigations proceed. Confidential records kept on a student will be shared with the student's parents.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the student must always be paramount, BBIS will do all in its power to support and work with the student's family.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Adopted: 2014

Revised: June 2017, September 2018

Next Revision Due: September 2019