



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024-25

THE OLD SCHOOL
L'ANCIENNE ECOLE

Contents

Ensuring the Highest Standards in Safeguarding Children	Objectives and Applications
	Emergency Numbers
Section A Definitions	
Section B Staff Code of Conduct	Rationale for a Staff Code of Conduct
	Child and Community Grooming
	Expectations
	Code of Conduct Clarifying Information
	Physical Contact Lower Primary School
	Intimate Care Lower Primary School
	Communication
	Photography
	Alumni
	Babysitting
	Private Parties
	Chance Meetings in Public
	Family, Friends and Relationships
	Physical Restraint
	Witnessing a Child that Needs Help off Campus
	Sexual and General Harassment Between Staff
Section C Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	Who are the Child Protection Team
	Procedures to be Followed
	Confidentiality
	Protocols for Handling Disclosures
	Believe Attention Seeking Students
Section D Other School Policy and Procedures that Safeguard Children	Absenteeism
	Recording Attendance
	Child Protection Considerations on Fieldtrips
	Coaches and Extra-Curricular Personnel
	Offsite Sports Matches and Homestays
	Students Transferring to Another School
	General Referral to Student Support Services
	Student Education
	Staff Education
	Parent Education
Section E Safer Recruitment Practices	
Appendix	Appendix 1. Signs of Abuse
	Appendix 2. Symptoms Child Sexual Abuse Emotional and behavioural Reactions by victim age

	Appendix 3. Signs of Offenders
	Appendix 4. Child Protection Report Form
	Appendix 5. Protocols for Handling Disclosure
	Appendix 6. Primary School Student Referral Form
	Appendix 7. Sample Safeguarding Interview Questions
Staff Acknowledgement of Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Staff Code of Conduct.	Please print or detach and return to the Directors PA in the Main office

Ensuring the Highest Standards in Safeguarding Children at The Old School

Objectives and Applications

The Old School aims to provide an environment in which students are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is dealt with in a prompt, appropriate and competent manner, and according to French Law.

In case of an indication of child endangerment, the risk of endangerment must be evaluated and attempts should be made to alleviate risks. If the school suspects child endangerment and there are not sufficient resources available or the parents refuse necessary help, then the case will be referred in line with French Law.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is applicable to all adults interacting, involved and working with any child at The Old School, including but not limited to parents, guardians, other family members, teachers, coaches, volunteers, assistants, school leadership team members, board members and office staff.

All employees must be familiar with and adhere to this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

This handbook aims to achieve five main objectives:

- A. Define child abuse and child neglect.
- B. Describe staff conduct expectations to safeguard against a school culture that allows child abuse to happen.
- C. Outline how to identify and report child abuse.
- D. Outline other related school policy and procedure that safeguards children.
- E. Describe The Old School's safer recruitment practices.

Identification of staff and visitors

From September 2022

Emergency and Important Numbers

For after school hours support, when The Old School staff are unavailable, then these numbers should help guide you towards obtaining support. Not all services are accessible in English, but please do call and ask.

Emergency Services (Police)	17
Sapeurs Pompiers/paramedics	18
European emergency number	112
Non-Emergency Medical (Doctor on Call)	116117
Nurse Advice Line	15
Child and Adolescents at risk	116111
Missing children	116000
Abduction alert	197
• Samu social - Homelessness	115
Suicide Hotline	3114
Support for women in need - Violence against women hotline	3919
Addiction and drug hotline	

Section A Definitions

Definition of the Child

Definition of Abuse

The Old School defines “abuse” as any situation or pattern of behaviour that is not conducive to the physical and emotional well-being of a child. Types of abuse include, but are not limited to:

Physical Abuse

Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means. This may include, but is not limited to physical discipline, instances of hitting, kicking, punching, shaking, slapping, burning, bruising, causing substantial risk to/the loss of any bodily function or failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above. These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as, cutting and suicide ideation. The application of any unreasonable physical force to a child is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. See Appendix 1 for signs of physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children or young people are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. The child may or may not be aware of being forced or enticed to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

This policy also applies to sexual contact between students when one of those involved does not understand or cannot give consent to, and which may cause emotional and/or physical harm. Sexual abuse is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. See Appendix 1 for signs of sexual abuse.

Psychological Abuse

Sometimes referred to as emotional or mental abuse, psychological abuse involves (but is not limited to) a pattern of verbal aggression, insults, threats, put-downs, exposure to family/domestic violence or lies that cause distress and seriously impair the cognitive, emotional, psychological and/or social development of the individual. See Appendix 1 for signs of psychological abuse.

This includes teacher yelling/denigrating and reducing children to tears

Neglect

Neglect encompasses a failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment and may involve physical, medical, educational and/or emotional aspects. Examples of neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Delay or refusal to seek healthcare/mental health services.
- Inadequate supervision or failure to assign an appropriate guardian in the event of parents leaving the country. In this instance, parents need to be aware of the particular importance of this being done in writing, and submitted to the school, so that in the event of a medical emergency, their child will be able to access medical attention. (Please see Parental Absence Form in the Parent/Student General Handbook).
- Failure to provide access to schooling, or failure to enforce regular and appropriate attendance at school.
- Inattention to a child's emotional needs/well-being.
- Permitting the use of drugs or alcohol by minors.
- Inadequate provision/monitoring of food and hygiene.

See Appendix 1 for signs of negligence.

Section B

Rationale for Staff Code of Conduct

The Old School is committed to the safety and protection of children and staff members. As a measure for prevention and for setting clear expectations, The Old School implements a Staff Code of Conduct to be agreed upon and adhered to by all school personnel and all volunteers who are part of the school community. The purpose is to create a school climate where every member of the community feels safe and protected, trusted, and cared for. We will uphold this by guarding against cultural slippage that might reset norms and allow behaviour contrary to our code to be normalised. This Staff Code of Conduct is informed by the work of the [International Task Force on Child Protection](#) with oversight from COBIS, the UK, the USA and other International Schools.

All employees should be approachable, supportive and must encourage students in their academic and emotional development. Staff can be vulnerable to the pushing of boundaries by students, thus, all employees must avoid situations in which their actions or words may be misunderstood or misrepresented. This should be done by maintaining professional speech, tone of voice, choice of appropriate language and topic. It should also be done by maintaining appropriate physical distance. A staff member is always the adult and sets and maintains the boundaries, and should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead for guidance, if/when in doubt.

The Old School aims to create a culture of awareness of the modus operandi of those individuals that would manipulate and take advantage of members of our community. We encourage an open culture of sharing with a member of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with regards to any observed boundary crossing that may represent a slip of our cultural norms. Complicit behaviour allows next stage boundary crossing behaviour to develop. Simultaneously, this must happen within a healthy, safe, non-threatening environment for our staff. All reports will be discussed with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead in a thoughtful community approach that humanises all parties involved.

Child and Community Grooming

Child Grooming involves befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, and sometimes the family or staff members in the community. This is done in order to lower the community's and a child's inhibitions and to build trust. Often the first people with whom potential child abusers build trust and relationships with, through a variety of means, are their fellow adults.

A culture where there has been a normalisation and acceptance of inappropriate interactions between adults that work in a professional capacity and the children they work with represents a slip of professional conduct boundaries. This and the crossing of other Staff Code of Conduct boundaries can open the door to naivety and blindness by students, staff and parents to those situations with other individuals who would push that boundary to a next stage abuse situation.

This can be especially pertinent when touch, inappropriate comments or other Staff Code of Conduct violations are done in plain sight with the seeming consent of other adults, the child's family or other child carers. In this way, those who might abuse a child capitalise on this type of culture to normalise their next stage behaviour and may 'groom' parents, students, and co-workers into a trust relationship.

Often abusers get children or other adults to engage in activities that cross conduct boundaries so that they themselves feel that they cannot tell anyone about boundary crossing of the abuser in the future for fear that their own behaviour will be exposed.

Be aware that potential abusers may also align with, or discredit school leaders, groups of staff or individual staff to further their versions of events, normalise their behaviour and to better ensure that they are believed if they are challenged.

We must always intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that adults or children are being groomed or abused in any way.

Psychological Abuse

This includes teacher yelling/denigrating and reducing children to tears.

The Old School Staff Code of Conduct Expectations

1. In our school community, we treat each other with respect and tolerance. We will refrain from comments or behaviours that demean, hurt, or discriminate. For example:

- a. Comments that are vulgar, lewd, lascivious, convey sexual innuendo or that threaten school community members, are unacceptable.
- b. The use of profanity by staff in front of students (cursing/swearing) is not acceptable.
- c. Negative speech about groups of staff or individuals that demean, discredit or undermine them is inappropriate. All staff concerns related to fellow staff members should be professionally addressed and should follow [The Old School's Communication Policy](#) regardless of their role in the school.

2. In our school community, we respect one another's physical boundaries. We are aware of cultural differences surrounding touch and disciplinary actions. Therefore, in compliance with French law and The Old School best practices, we will adhere to the following practices.

Physical aggression toward any school community member at any time and in any way, is unacceptable.

- a. If a child initiates a hug, then gently hug them from the side and immediately and gently disengaging from the contact.

- b. Students should never be picked up, kissed or allowed to sit on your lap. In cases of injury, use professional discretion and bring a first aider to a student where possible. Students should not be pushed, prodded, physically moved or restrained unless there is clear evidence that their personal safety or the safety of others is in danger of being compromised.
- c. Hand-holding is not appropriate.

3. At The Old School, all contact between members of the school community should be professional and respectful. We adhere to the following:

- a. Leaving campus during school time or after school with a student enrolled at the school is not acceptable unless it is a pre-arranged field trip, is supported by the requisite number of chaperones and has the consent of parents (see Tips for Trips).
- b. One-on-one meetings with a child or young person should be held in a public area of the school in a room where the interaction can be observed or in a room with the door left open. Doors made of full glass are considered open. Another staff member or supervisor should be notified about recurring meetings. Exceptions are made in nursing or counselling situations. These individuals have undergone very specific undergraduate and postgraduate training because of the sensitive and confidential nature of their student support work. They should use their own certified association's professional conduct guidelines as well as the The Old School Staff Code of Conduct to guide their work.
- c. Employees and volunteers are not to be alone with a student in a closed room (see 3b) or vehicle during class trips, excursions and sporting events even if the student is sick. Have another staff member join you with the student/s where necessary.
- d. Employees are not allowed to be friends with students on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or similar unless they are parents or relatives of a student. (See Social Media Policy).
- e. Students should not be invited to a staff member's house unless they are there to socialise with staff children as peers. You should not visit the house of students unless this is for staff children to socialise with their peers. (See Family, Friends and Relationships clarification below)
- f. Be transparent about gift giving to avoid behaviour consistent with favouritism and remember frequent, secretive or individualised gift giving is not appropriate.
- g. If a student is enrolled at the school, then all tutoring should occur on campus, and not at the staff member's home or the home of the student.

4. In an effort to be positive role models for our students, and to keep our students safe, we adhere to the following:

- a. Administration, staff, employees, and volunteers should never possess or use illegal drugs, or use alcohol or tobacco products when working with children.
- b. Staff should not exceed the guidelines of their medically prescribed drugs when working with children.
- c. Adults should never buy or distribute alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, audio-visual, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people or be responsible for their exposure to it in any way.

- d. Smoking is not permitted on the secure school site. The school's guideline is that this should also not occur in view of students who are on the campus.

Staff Code of Conduct Clarifying Information

Communication

Communication with children is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. If you would be happy to show your communication to a leadership team member or a counsellor then it is appropriate. The following steps are designed to reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between The Old School parents, administration, staff, personnel, volunteers, and children:

- Communication between The Old School staff and students enrolled at the school, that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship they are employed or partnered with for, is prohibited.
- Electronic exchanges between a student and a person acting on behalf of the school are to be made using a school email address or school endorsed electronic teaching and learning platform that encourages and confers a professional tone.
- Staff, and volunteers who use any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with students may only do so for activities involving school business. (See Social Media Policy 4.70).

Photography

Photography should always be for internal publications and school endorsed social media only. Discretion should be used. It is appropriate to take photos that demonstrate students' learning, the spirit of an event, experiences that are to be shared on the school network for school publications, or used in relation to the appropriate school handles, hashtags or links. At all times, the Social Media Policy should be followed. A few families have elected to not sign a waiver allowing us to use their child's image and a document with the names of those students who cannot be shown on social media is regularly updated and distributed to staff. Consult this list before posting any photos of students on social media. Also, please be aware that it is preferable to show students in a discreet manner even if a waiver is signed allowing The Old School to show a student's image. For example, use a photo of a student doing work at an angle rather than showing a student's full face. If a staff member has any questions or concerns they should consult the Data Protection Officer.

Alumni

Although now young adults, we want to protect Alumni and prevent their grooming while still at school and prior to their graduation. Staff are in possession of knowledge and observations about the specific vulnerabilities of children while they are enrolled at the school. A school staff member is in a social position of trust and should seek advice on relationships with Alumni after they have graduated so as to cultivate transparency. Specifically meeting an Alumni during school time or after school for the purpose of

developing a romantic or sexual relationship is an area for the school's concern but one it has no jurisdiction over.

Ideally, by informing the Director and Directrice if you pursue a romantic or sexual relationship with an alumnus, you would help to engender an Old School culture of transparency and thoughtful professionalism in this sensitive area. In this way, we aim to enable a check and balance on the possibility of child grooming while the individual was a child at the school or immediately thereafter.

Babysitting

The Old School children can put their name down on a list to offer paid babysitting services to The Old School staff members. Staff and students value the opportunity to work with trusted members of the community and it is not unusual for international schools to help facilitate the initial communication between students and staff. Our students and staff are placed in direct touch with one another via the babysitting list, but after that, staff retain responsibility for this relationship.

The school has no jurisdiction over babysitter-parent interactions. However, there is a great deal of power difference between staff and students thus babysitting presents a vulnerable area for a school community in terms of child protection. In normal circumstances, it would be against our staff Code of Conduct to invite students to a member of staff's house or to ride in their car home. However, risks can be reasonably mitigated by students sensibly recognising other signs that a staff-student boundary has been broken. We expect a member of staff and their partner or spouse to act as professionally as they would on the campus with students. Simply, students should feel safe and respected. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with students on the babysitting list each Fall to ensure that they are aware of their rights, are able to advocate for themselves and feel confident in recognising when a boundary has been broken.

Private Parties

Staff are not and should never be the friends of students. Invitations from parents where students will be in attendance should be evaluated carefully. If parents have not invited you or are not present then attendance is unacceptable. If parents have invited you to an event then ask yourself 'What will my role be'? Use your professional judgement and remain in your teacher role following the Staff Code of Conduct at all times. Off campus you still have the status of an Old School teacher and therefore, the responsibilities that come with the associated power differential between yourself and students, even when in the presence of their parents. While some families or the law may condone certain behaviours, the school sets boundaries for its own staff to uphold professional conduct. To protect yourself if students are using alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco, even in the presence of their parents or guardians, you are advised to leave the event or to create physical distance. Staff should never be involved in buying, sharing or distributing alcohol, drugs or tobacco to students.

Chance Meetings in Public

Inevitably you will run into students off campus. Remember that students off the school campus can make poor decisions about where professional boundaries lie and could become

overly familiar with you in public. Also, this is when we may let our guard down, so take care that you make a polite greeting but keep a distance to protect yourself if possible.

Family, Friends and Relationships

Code of Conduct lines can become blurred where staff at the school have children that have playdates and parties or travel and socialise in the same sphere. Use a common-sense and transparent approach to relationships and, if in doubt, apply the guidelines and expectations of the Staff Code of Conduct to your interaction with students and those of staff interacting with your child. Staff always have the status and trust of a teacher and children always have the status of minor, regardless of the setting.

Physical Restraint

There may be rare occasions when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain children and prevent them from coming to harm or running away from a place they can be made safe. Such intervention should always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation. A useful document to refer to if you are concerned and feel you need more guidance is the [UK Department for Education's \(DfE\) Booklet, Use of Reasonable Force in Schools](#). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will require the adult(s) involved in any such incident to report the matter to them immediately. The family should also be informed as soon as possible. Develop a plan of action to respond in partnership with the family to a child's unique safety needs in this area if they recur. This should be a team approach where the class staff and Designated Safeguarding Lead are aware of daily needs, possible scenarios and response and team support options. All staff involved in restraining a child should have undertaken relevant Positive Handling training.

Witnessing a Child in Trouble that Needs Help off Campus

A regular citizen in France is bound by law to intervene with help or to inform the emergency services when a person or persons are in an immediately life-threatening situation.

As a staff member, you may witness the unsafe or concerning behaviour of a student enrolled at our school out of hours. Although you have no obligation to, you may feel that continuing a duty of care to them is appropriate for their wellbeing and safety. In these instances, we recommend using your professional judgement in the moment which might include a combination of the following:

- Call emergency services if appropriate
- Defer care to their accompanying friends if possible
- Give them sound advice for their own safety
- Call a 'certified' taxi (make a point of taking the registration and number of the taxi before it leaves) to take them home.
- If the student is incapacitated and cannot make their way home alone, or in a taxi, or with a friend, call the emergency services.

In all cases, report what happened to the Director, Directrice or a member of the Child Protection team at your earliest possible opportunity.

Sexual and General Harassment Between Staff

Be aware that child abusers often break down Code of Conduct boundaries by using sexual language with students and other staff to normalise their behaviour. In addition, they may build your trust through compliments or romantic suggestions in order to distract you from their inappropriate behaviour with children and ensure that you are less likely to notice or report boundary crossing especially if you have already become complicit to it.

Someone who sexually harasses others can be a woman or a man. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature all constitute sexual harassment when:

1. An employment decision (or threat of one) affecting that individual is made because the individual submitted to or rejected the unwelcome conduct.
2. The unwelcome conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or abusive work environment.
3. Repeated comments or actions that disrespect another member of staff through aggressive or demeaning physical actions or verbal comments.
4. Repeated unwelcome advances or unwelcome personal behaviour (verbally or through electronic or written communication) makes the member of staff feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Unwelcome actions such as the following are inappropriate:

- Sexual pranks, or repeated sexual teasing, jokes, or innuendo, in person or via electronic communication
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Touching or grabbing of a sexual nature
- Repeatedly standing too close to or brushing up against a person
- Repeatedly asking a person to socialise during off-duty hours when the person has said no or has indicated they are not interested
- Giving gifts or leaving objects that are sexually suggestive
- Repeatedly making sexually suggestive gestures
- Making or posting sexually demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials in the workplace
- Off-duty, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that affects the work environment
- Initiating unwelcome emailing, texting or telephone calling
- Unwelcome home visits
- Threats or manipulative behaviour
- Constantly following them around or seeking them out without invitation



Section C

Suspecting Child Abuse

Identifying and Reporting

The school will follow French law concerning requirements with regards to reporting cases of suspected abuse to the authorities. The school has access to outside agencies, but will in the first instance, conduct and manage situations of abuse and neglect internally via referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This is, however, dependent on the extent of the abuse/neglect and the cooperation of the parties involved. If a formal report is made to external authorities, there may be an investigation by the Mairie who might put supportive measures in place.

Who are The Designated Safeguarding Leads?

Joel Bailey is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The team consists of:

- Director – Joel Bailey
- Directrice – Danièle Birchall
- Julie Pollitt

Procedures to be followed in cases of suspected abuse/neglect:

(See **Appendix 1: Signs of Abuse** and **Appendix 2. Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse** and **Appendix 3. Signs of Offenders**)

- A member of staff (including coaches, music tutors, office staff or any other affiliated co-curricular member of staff and volunteers) receives information about the potential endangerment of a child.
- The staff member immediately informs the Designated Safeguarding Lead who coordinates the Child Protection Team or another member of the team. This should be done **in writing** using the Child Protection Reporting Form (see **Appendix 4**).
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead calls a Case Conference with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any other people relevant to the case minimising the number of people involved while maximising an effective team approach. This may include:
 - The person who reported the information
 - The Head of School
 - The Homeroom teacher
 - The Counsellor

The case conference has several functions:

- To establish the level of endangerment
- To discuss action to be taken and by whom (e.g. meeting with parents, child, information to other staff if necessary, follow up investigation)
- To decide if external support is necessary
- To decide whether to contact police

- To decide to make an official report to the Maire

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has the responsibility to follow up and monitor the actions agreed upon, to contact the external support agencies and to make the official report to the Mairie. They will also be the main contact person to outside agencies.

Confidentiality:

Strict confidentiality will be maintained for all cases of suspected abuse. Employees making a report should refrain from discussing the case with anyone other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The child protection reporting form records made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Child Protection Team are kept secure on site and are not accessible to staff in the school unless absolutely necessary. However, the school reserves the right to contact future school and/or authorities in case of sudden departure during the investigation.

If a member of staff is distressed or feels the need for support after a disclosure they should talk to the Leadership team.

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

With the provision that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, The Old School will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family and continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed.

Protocols for Handling Disclosures

A disclosure is the moment that a child shares with you details of a situation or incident that implicitly or explicitly suggests that they are the victim of an abusive situation or have been the victim of an abusive situation. You may be the trusted member of staff who a child discloses to. This may be a surprise to you thus all staff should be ready to deal appropriately with either an outright disclosure, or dialogue that indicates that one might be pending. If you suspect a student is summoning up the courage to share something important with you, that you suspect might be related to child abuse, consult a Designated Safeguarding Lead to get advice on how best to respond if this becomes the case. Please note: staff are not investigators. Your role is to listen and respond to disclosures in order to determine the next step for students to get the help they need.

There are some clear protocols for dealing with disclosures. They are outlined in **Appendix 5**.

It is difficult for children to disclose abuse for the following reasons:

- **Memory.** Children often cope with their abuse by pushing it so far back in their minds that they "forget." To remember means to feel hurt again.

- **Loss of Love.** Children often worry that their parents or friends won't love them once they know about their abuse because now they are "unclean". This is often because children will take responsibility for their abuse. Children also often fear the separation of their family because of the telling. Offenders work hard to reinforce these feelings in order to keep the child silent.
- **Shame & Guilt.** Children either know or can sense that what happened, especially a sexual experience with an adult, is wrong. By telling someone and acknowledging that this happened, they fear the shame of the abuse. They fear they will get into trouble for telling. Older children will experience more of a sense of guilt than younger children, especially in sexual abuse.
- **Blame.** Children fear that they will be blamed for what happened and in the case of sexual abuse that they somehow wanted it. Adults tend to be believed over the child and offenders often state that the child "asked" for sexual touch or other abuse.
- **Harm.** Offenders often maintain control over their victims by threatening harm to them or their families if they tell. Children are then burdened with the inappropriate responsibility for keeping their families safe.

Responding to Disclosure – Very Important

- Do not let a child swear to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them. Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not a judgement call and you **must** share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead **any level** of abuse that is disclosed.
- Your tone of voice and body language should convey that you take them seriously and believe them, respect their strength and courage to tell someone
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral setting where you can have quiet and few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting them explain in their own words.
- Ask open-ended but not leading questions if you need to.
- Don't pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the abuser - it is often someone the child loves or with whom they are close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront the abuser.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report and handle immediately by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (see contact details on page 2). **Do not let the child go home and do not take the child home with you!**
- If you believe the child will go home to continued abuse, even if it has been going on for some time, this should be considered an emergency. Report and handle immediately by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not let the child go home and **do not take the child home with you!**
- Respect the child's confidence. Share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, but limit information with other staff unless it is necessary for the child's immediate protection or the protection of others.

- Explain to the child that you must tell someone else to get help.
- Try to let the child know that someone else also will need to talk with them and explain why.
- Empower the student as much as possible by allowing the child to be a part of the process.

Believe Attention Seeking Students

- You should recognise immediately that these are vulnerable students and their behaviour may be a complex manifestation of their life experiences. They should be listened to and respected, and their disclosures should be dealt with in the same professional way.
- Some students are not believed because they are thought to be displaying 'attention seeking behaviour' and, to some, a disclosure may be further evidence of that behaviour. Often, these students try to develop relationships with adults and seem to crave adult attention. This may be a symptom of physical, sexual, psychological, media abuse or neglect elsewhere in their current or past life.
- Attention seeking behaviour may involve trying to push adult boundaries past a professional limit, or constantly trying to elicit attention, seemingly to hearten themselves by being naughty, breaking rules, by being in the limelight or eliciting validation from others.
- These students are vulnerable to further or escalated types of abuse and are easily taken advantage of. Sometimes they are then abused in multiple situations by multiple offenders. Because of the manifestation of their abuse in their behaviour they may be the last to be believed and the last children whose abuse is spotted by others.

Section D

Other School Policy and Procedures that Safeguard Children

Absenteeism

At The Old School we believe that unexplained or chronic absenteeism requires child protection intervention. We apply this policy from our youngest learners to our oldest.

What systems do we have for monitoring absence and what procedures are then followed?

- The school's Wellbeing Concern Form should be submitted to the Director at the first signs of attendance being a concern. **(See Appendix 6.)**
- A sign of concern is if attendance regularly drops below 95% (the equivalent of a regular half day off every 10 days). In this way, interventions against further absence escalation can be made and provision for support in clearly documented health situations can involve a team approach with the family.
- Documentation should be kept of parent meetings and any follow up.

Recording Attendance

Children are at risk if they leave home but never make it to school, do not make it to their class after lunch or in the event of a fire or other emergency. In all cases, we must have a system in place that promptly alerts us to the fact that a child is not in class as we expect. Students without exception should be entering their homeroom class at 9:00 and attendance should be entered into the system by 9:15. Any students arriving late must sign in at the main office and should always arrive with a late slip. Each class should take attendance at the start of each lesson. Please alert the office if you see that a child has been marked present earlier and has not arrived to your class. Students who do not arrive at school, and who have not had a parent email or call in their excuse are flagged for follow up and their parents are called to ensure that they are safe.

Child Protection Considerations on Fieldtrips

Staff planning off-campus field trips should note that children are more vulnerable in off-campus situations for a variety of reasons. Children and staff off-campus recognise that rules and routines are different, interactions with new adults may occur and relationships and expectations can be easily blurred. Child protection is therefore embedded in our school trip risk assessment forms. A detailed The Old School Tips for Trips Policy and risk assessment planning can be found in the office.

Coaches and Extra-Curricular Personnel

There are special considerations for Coaches and Extra-Curricular Personnel in relation to child protection and it should be an area where we must take extra diligence to train and integrate adults that work with our young people to our culture.

All coaches and extra-curricular personnel should adhere to the policy and procedures outlined in this, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including the staff Code of Conduct and the Social Media Policy. They should be background checked and trained as other staff are.

Offsite Sports Matches and Homestays

Offsite matches and travel to games should be reviewed through our field trip risk assessment process and each trip leader that leaves should have reviewed the appropriate risk assessment form with the Director. These trips represent a greater risk factor if homestay occurs. The team travelling with the students must fully review the risk assessment form together before leaving and act accordingly.

Students Transferring to Another School

When students are asked to leave The Old School, or when there is doubt as to the future educational arrangements for a child:

- the Director will be notified

- The Mairie of Monbahus and of the child's commune will be informed by the Director
- The child will be taken off roll

General Referral for Student Support

All staff should feel comfortable to seek advice or refer to student support services at the first signs that they are unable to fully support a student within their regular class, or within their regular day-to-day routines for whatever reason. Inform the Director at the first signs of a student displaying a pattern of attendance, emotional or learning need. A change in a student's learning needs may be the first sign of a vulnerable child that needs our support.

Student Education

Students in all classes are encouraged, through the pastoral program and the work of the staff to develop assertiveness skills through their teachers. In particular, the focus will be on identifying safe and unsafe situations, learning vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches, developing understanding of healthy relationships, and identifying trusted persons.

Senior leaders, alongside teaching staff, are responsible for developing and implementing a vertical written curriculum that will be developed and taught to students annually to include strategies to recognise inappropriate behaviours, respond assertively and to report incidents to school personnel and/or family members. Relevant staff as assigned are responsible for implementing the curriculum as written and Heads of Section are responsible for the integrity and quality of its implementation.

Staff Education

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

This should be read and reviewed manually by all staff. Before beginning work at The Old School, it should be read by all staff, coaches, volunteers, assistants, school leadership, board members and office staff. It will be reviewed and updated every two years. Each year, staff are asked to attend Safeguarding and Child Protection training sessions.

In-School Training:

Each Autumn, all new staff have two hours of initial Child Protection Training that existing staff have been exposed to.

Training 1: Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse

Training 2: Modus Operandi of Child Sex Offenders and lessons from Serious Case Reviews.



Off Site Training:

External opportunities endorsed by [COBIS](#) are encouraged and funded with key personnel attending. The Designated Safeguarding Leads must have attended one workshop of this nature every year.

Parent Education

Each year the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be redistributed to parents and a voluntary parent session will be held to educate parents about safeguarding practices at The Old School.

Section E**Safer Recruiting Practices**

"Aligned with the recommendations of the International Task Force on Child Protection, we hold ourselves to a high standard of effective recruiting practices with specific attention to child protection." A number of safer recruiting practices are employed at The Old School including:

1. Safeguarding Interview Questions

At least three questions must be used in face-to-face or online interviews (see **Appendix 7**)

2. Verbal References

At least two verbal references are taken by telephone by the Director for all potential employees where the question is always asked *"Is there any reason at all we should be concerned about X candidate in relation to child abuse and child safety?"*

3. Written References

All potential employees are asked to provide at least three referees that the school contacts and verifies the identity of, or that have been contacted by an external recruitment agency. Ready written references are not accepted.

4. Background Checks

All new employees are required to submit an extended police clearance/background check not older than 6 months issued by the last country they lived in. In addition, they are required to provide a background check from any other countries of residence they have lived in over the last 10 years.

Updated, local Lot-et-Garonne police clearances are required of all staff, affiliated staff and volunteers every 2 years.

Before working on site these conditions must have been met.

Appendix 1: Signs of Abuse

Behaviour that is out of character is not in itself an indication of mistreatment. Nonetheless, there are three ways in which the suspicion of mistreatment may be raised:

1. Through observations of signs and symptoms.
2. Through allegations or reports of mistreatment made by another person, perhaps a concerned student or parent.
3. By disclosure from the child which points to mistreatment.

Signs of Physical Abuse	Signs of Sexual Abuse
• Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts, scratches around ears and neck • Improbable excuses given to explain injuries - including for bruises in soft areas like abdominal area/bottom/cheeks • Injuries which have not received medical attention - • Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc. • Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains • Refusal to discuss injuries • Withdrawal from physical contact • Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather • Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted • Showing wariness or distrust of adults • Self-destructive tendencies • Being aggressive towards others • Being very passive and compliant • Chronic running away • Attention seeking/looking to be loved	• Pain or irritation to the genital area • Vaginal or penile discharge • Difficulty with urination • Infection, bleeding • STDs • Fear of people or places • Aggression • Regressive behaviours, bed-wetting or stranger anxiety • Sexually provocative behaviour • Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting • Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive - any significant change in their usual behaviours • Suffering from what seem physical ailments that can't be explained medically • Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult • Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person • Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities • Age inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language • Attention seeking/looking to be loved

Some Indicators of Neglect	Signs of Psychological Abuse
• Medical needs unattended • Lack of supervision • Consistent hunger • Inappropriate dress for the weather conditions • Inadequate nutrition • Fatigue or listlessness • Self-destructive behaviour • Drug or alcohol abuse • Withdrawal or avoidance of social and peer interactions • Repeatedly seeking affection outside of the expected range for the age and peer group • Failure to grow • Poor personal hygiene • Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school • Low self-esteem • Poor social relationships • Compulsive stealing • Attention seeking/looking to be loved	• Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed • Highly anxious • Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder • Fear of new situations • Low self-esteem - continual self-criticism or blaming and poor view of self • Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations • Extremes of passivity or aggression • Drug or alcohol abuse • Chronic running away • Compulsive stealing • Obsessions or phobias • Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration • Attention-seeking behaviour • Persistent tiredness • Lying

Appendix 2: Symptoms Child Sexual Abuse

Emotional and behavioural Reactions by Victim Age:

Emotional Reactions

Behavioural Reactions

School age (9 to 13 years)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Ambivalent feelings towards adults· Fear, shame, guilt· Depression· Fear of being dirty or ruined· Feelings of incompetence· Distrust· Suicidal ideation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Social retreat, no socially appropriate relationships with same-age peers· Truancy· Manipulative behaviours· Sexually abuse of younger children· Promiscuous behaviours• Attention seeking/looking to be loved |
|--|---|

Adolescence (13 to 18 years)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anger, shame• Guilt• Feelings of betrayal, distrustful | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-destructive behaviours, drug use• Running away from home• Aggressive behaviours, exploiting others• Taking on the abuser role• Avoid physical and emotional intimacy• Suicide attempts• Attention seeking/looking to be loved |
|--|--|

Appendix 3: Signs of Offenders

Signs of Offenders (Students)

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualising inanimate objects and activities
- Does not stop sexual behaviour when told to stop
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Unusual intensity when discussing sex and sexuality
- Socialises with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships
- Encourages rule breaking to entrap others and make victims frightened to share.
- Can build trust then invite contact so capitalising on the openness, curiosity and natural exploration of young children so that children become 'consenting parties'.

Signs of Offenders (Adults)

- Has “favourite” student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with children
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children/adults
- Gives private gifts or has private chats on social media or the internet
- Seeks out physical touch with students
- normalises behaviour that violates professional conduct within the community
- Seeks out ways to be alone with children
- Seeks to build trusting relationships and normalise behaviour with adults before offending
- Encourages rule breaking to entrap others and make victims frightened to share.
- Can build trust then invite contact so capitalising on the openness, curiosity and natural exploration of young children so that children become 'consenting parties'.

Appendix 4. Child Protection Reporting Procedure

What will this be at The Old School?

The Old School uses the COBIS form of concern – this needs attaching here!

Appendix 5. Protocols for Handling Disclosure

What to do and say when someone tells you about a child safeguarding concern:

- a. Reassure the person that they were right to raise the concern.
 - Create trust with the complainant but do NOT promise to keep secrets.
 - Take what they say seriously, even if it appears hard to believe.
 - Address health and protection needs or contact authorities if this is urgently required.
 - Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Information, Training and Education as soon as the situation allows this.
- b. Gather information on the case:
 - You are not expected to investigate the case but gather basic information about what may have taken place.
 - Record the actual words used as soon as possible, if not immediately.
 - Avoid asking too many questions: ask only the number of questions required to gain a clear understanding of the complaint.
 - Avoid asking “why” and “how” something took place.
 - Establish and record details of all those who may be at risk.
- c. Address issues of confidentiality.
 - Explain that information will only be shared with people who need to know.
 - Explain that it is in the best interest of the individual disclosing that the concern is reported.
- d. Explain to the complainant what will happen next.
 - Explain that the concern will be reported.
 - Inform them that you will provide feedback on what happens.
- e. **Report immediately as per the reporting procedure.**
- f. If a child comes back to you as a follow-up (to provide more information or as a trusted adult)
 - Treat each encounter with the student as a “new encounter” in regards to reporting
 - Follow the guidelines as stated above

Guidelines When a Child Tells You They Have Been Abused

In addition to points listed in the general guidelines above:

- React calmly, do not panic.
- Assure them that they are not to blame for the abuse. Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Never push for information, repeatedly ask the same question, or ask leading questions. For example, say, "Then what happened", don't say "Did he touch your leg?"
- Do not fill in words, finish sentences, or make assumptions. Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.

Things to say

- Repeat the last few words of the child in a questioning manner. "I believe you."
- "I am going to try to help you."
- "I am glad you told me."
- "You are not to blame."

Things NOT to say

- "You should have told someone before."
- "I can't believe it."
- "I'm shocked."
- "I won't tell anyone else."
- "Why?"
- "How?"

Appendix 6. Generic Student Support Services Referral Form (1 of 3)

Primary specific and Secondary specific forms are available in shared files.

Name of Student:

Date of Referral:

Birth Date:

Referring Teacher:

Class/grade:

Languages spoken in the home:

Indicate which language is the mother tongue.

How long has the student attended The Old School? Prior school (if any)?

Does the student receive ESL support? How often?

If so, has ESL been consulted concerning this referral?

Does the student receive LAP support? In what area?

Reasons for referral:

Please provide a description for each area that is checked. Also, please rate the student on how he/she compares to the other students in your class.

Area	Check all areas of concern	Description <i>Present level of performance</i> <i>Observations</i>	Rate (1-5) <i>(low-high)</i>
Reading skills			
Math skills			
Writing skills			
Attention/concentration issues			

Following directions			
Completing work			
Participating in a group setting			
Social/Emotional			
Behavioural			
Other Concerns:			

Modifications Attempted

Please check the modifications that you have attempted with this student and rank them according to their effectiveness.

1 - Successful

2 – Progressing

3 - Unsuccessful

Environment

- ___ Change in seating
- ___ Change in groups
- ___ Isolation/time out
- ___ One to one instruction
- ___ Reducing auditory/visual distractions
- ___ Provide opportunities for movement
- ___ Other

Assignments

- ___ Shorten or simplify class work
- ___ Student repeats directions back
- ___ Prompts/cueing by teacher
- ___ Visual supports
- ___ Multi-sensory approaches
- ___ Other

Rewards

- ___ Daily behaviour note sent home
- ___ Student contract
- ___ Behaviour chart
- ___ Point system
- ___ Other

Communication

- ___ Student conference
- ___ Parent conference
- ___ Phone calls home
- ___ Emails
- ___ Writing in daily homework diary

Additional modifications attempted / additional comments:

Please attach student's work samples, grades, documentation, etc. that represent the specific problems and return this form to the Head of Section. All forms must be completed before submitting. Once a form has been fully completed, an initial case study will be scheduled.

Parent Contact

Have you contacted the parents regarding the specific concerns/difficulties the student is experiencing?

Please indicate the date you contacted the parents_____.

Please indicate the outcome of the conversation (provide documentary evidence, such as an email):

To be completed prior to the initial referral meeting:

Health/ Development History

Please complete the checklist to provide the Learning Enrichment Department with the additional information needed for an evaluation.

- ____ Taking medication
- ____ Wears glasses
- ____ Allergies
- ____ Retained? ____ Grade
- ____ Other known medical problems

Please list the date of the student's most recent hearing and vision test._____

If student does not have a recent hearing/vision test, please recommend the parents obtain one from the pediatrician

To be filled out in initial meeting:

Staff requested to attend the initial meeting:

Action Plan

Person responsible:

Follow up meeting date:_____



Appendix 7. Sample Safeguarding Interview Questions

Notes for interviewers:

Not only when asking questions about safeguarding, but throughout the interview process, interviewers should be attuned to answers that are vague or unrealistic. In particular, interviewers should look out for answers that show no or little understanding or appreciation of children's needs or expectations; that fail to recognise the particular vulnerabilities of children from troubled backgrounds; inappropriate language about children; unclear boundaries with children; and answers that imply adults and children are equal.

It can be particularly difficult for an inexperienced staff member to maintain proper boundaries where the age differential between staff and service user is small, for example, as a worker with young people, or a young teacher working with A level students. It may be worth designing a question around this issue if it is relevant. When forming questions, consider what kinds of responses you are looking for. Where candidates are finding it difficult to understand wording used, it is helpful to have prepared an alternative phrase or to expand sufficiently for the candidate to be able to answer.

If applicants have unexplained gaps in their employment history, referee list, or have moved frequently from one job to another, explanations should be sought.

Questions probing motivation for working with children:

- a. What do you feel are the main reasons that have led you to want to work with children?
- b. What has working with young people/children taught you about yourself?
- c. Why do you want to work with children? What do you think you have to offer? Give an example of how children have benefited from contact with you.

Questions probing values and ethics:

- a. How do you feel when someone holds an opinion that differs from your own? How do you behave in that situation?
- b. What are your attitudes to child protection? How have these developed over time?
- c. What are your feelings about children who make allegations against staff?
- d. Have you ever had concerns about a colleague with regards to his or her behaviour or attitude towards the children in his or her care? How did you deal with this?
- e. Give me an example of where you had to deal with bullying behaviour.
- f. Give me an example of how you have managed poor pupil behaviour.
- g. What do you think makes a school safe and supportive?

Questions probing knowledge of policy and procedure:

- a. What have you done in the last twelve months to improve safeguarding of children in the workplace?
- b. Describe to us the key aspects of the safeguarding policy in your workplace

- c. Give me an example of when you have had a safeguarding concern about a child. What happened?
- d. Tell us about a time when you have had to challenge the views of someone more senior than yourself in relation to safeguarding concerns. What was the outcome?
- e. Tell us about a time when you took action to help protect a child.
- f. Describe the procedures that need to be in place to protect children.
- g. How in your work or life so far have you tried to ensure that children are protected?
- h. Give me an example of when you had safeguarding concerns over a child.
- i. Have you ever felt uncomfortable about a colleague's behaviour towards children in a previous job? What were your concerns, what did you do, and how was the issue resolved?
- j. Safeguarding children is an important part of our work. Can you give me some examples of how you would contribute to making the organization a safer environment for children?

Questions probing emotional maturity and resilience:

- a. Tell us about a person with whom you have had particular difficulty in dealing. What made it difficult? How did you manage the situation?
- b. Tell us about a time when you have been working with children and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? With hindsight, how might you have improved your response?

Safeguarding Interview Questions- Adapted from Hampshire County Council Education Authority, UK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

I will strictly follow the rules and guidelines in the The Old School Staff Code of Conduct. I understand that this policy pertains, but is not limited to, professional behaviour with all children of school age enrolled or that have been enrolled at The Old School.

I agree to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead any instances where I feel that Staff Code of Conduct boundaries have been crossed in order to protect the community.

This handbook of policy and procedure details how The Old School aims to provide an environment in which students are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is dealt with in a prompt, appropriate and competent manner, and according to French Law. All employees working within the school must be familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and its implication within the school.

I have also read the Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure and I will report suspected boundary crossing, child abuse and neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as described in the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of the School.

Printed Name	
Date	
Signed	
To be signed by all staff and adults, including volunteers, working within our community.	

Please return to the The Old School Secretary in the main office before beginning employment.