



SHERBORNE QATAR

# **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

# **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (*incorporating Intimate Care Policy and Guidance for Parent Helpers*)**

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Next review September 2023

Reviewed by Nadira Rahman (Second Master: Director of Studies)

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# Safeguarding & Child Protection

## School Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Mrs Nadira Rahman – (Second Master: Director of Studies Prep School and Junior School)

## Supporting Safeguarding Leads:

Name	Role	Location
Mrs Heidi Berry	Deputy Head & Head of Pre-Prep	Prep School
Mr Andy Bray	Deputy Head & Head of KS2	Prep School
Mrs Sarah Bennett	Deputy Head	Junior School
Mrs Larissa Hughes	Intervention Teacher	Prep School
Miss Sarah Nicholls	Head of PE & Games	Prep School and Junior School
Mrs Suzan Saad	Head of Arabic	Prep School and Junior School
Mrs Gail Williams	Year teacher, Head of House & Music teacher	Prep School
	Music teacher	Junior School

## Introduction

Sherborne Qatar strives to be a school where children are nurtured, valued, happy and safe. Any safeguarding concerns are dealt with very seriously. All concerns are logged and reviewed through the Safeguarding Leads.

Please note that we are sensitive to some parents' wishes that their child/ren should not appear in any school photos that might appear in the public domain (e.g. on the school website, in the local paper, etc.). Therefore, parents who do not want their child's photo to appear in the public domain, should inform the Headmaster in writing.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the School. The main aims of our policy are:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his / her agreed child protection plan;
- Establishing a safe environment in which children feel secure, learn, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Contributing to the well-being of children by securing their protection from abuse, in partnership with parents, enabling them to maximise their parental responsibility (except where to do so would be inconsistent with the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child);

- Working closely with other agencies as necessary (e.g. The Ministry for Education and Higher Education, Society for the Protection of Women and Children in Qatar / Social Services, Police, Healthcare Services, Educational Welfare Services, NSPCC in UK);
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the different forms of abuse and the correct procedures to follow if abuse is suspected.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, School staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach if they are worried;
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

### **Organisation and Management**

- Ensure we have designated senior people for Child Protection (who have, where possible received appropriate UK training and support for this role)
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection. (*Nick Prowse, Principal and CEO*);
- Ensure all staff have successfully completed the online Level 2 CP Course for International Schools, run by COBIS;
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection;
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the School and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the Parents' Handbook;
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries;
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations;
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer;
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The

School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at School their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The School will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum;
- The School ethos and Core Values promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued;
- The School's Positive Behaviour Policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the School. The School will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Our Child Protection Policy is monitored by regular reviews from the School Leadership Team and external agencies with which we work (ISI, PENTA etc.). It is reviewed annually to ensure it is effective and in line with latest and best UK practice.

### **Safeguarding Procedures**

Staff work to protect the welfare of children and we ask that parents are also vigilant. The School and its employees have a statutory duty to report concerns to Society for the Protection of Women and Children in Qatar relating to the welfare of the children in its care, should they feel a child is at risk from abuse.

All members of staff should be alert to the fact that any pupil may suffer abuse and recognise their responsibility towards the protection of that child. Child abuse may be defined as any situation where a child has been the victim of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect on the part of the parents, guardians or any other person having legal custody of the child. On occasions a child may be the victim of such abuse from a person with no apparent link.

Diagnosing abuse is extremely difficult but there are a number of indicators that may alert staff and these may include:

- repeated minor injuries, e.g. bruises or cuts;
- being dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or apparently underfed;
- having lingering illnesses that are apparently unattended;
- unexplained changes in behaviour;
- deterioration in School work;
- aggressive behaviour;
- severe tantrums;
- depression or withdrawal;
- sexually explicit behaviour or showing inappropriate awareness;
- reluctance to go home;

- apparent reluctance to trust adults;
- reversion to immature behaviour for age;
- inappropriate attention seeking behaviour.

No-one should jump to conclusions on noting one or more of these indicators and they should act only as a guide and perhaps a trigger towards awareness and closer observation.

The Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center (PSRC), one of the six organisations under the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, exists to support all children regardless of nationality in Qatar. The centre's goals include 'empowerment, rehabilitation and reintegration of women, girls and children victims of violence and child victims of family disintegration'. The Child Protection Officers are able to contact the PSRC (there is a school hotline - 919 108 116 - with Arabic and English speaking operators) for advice and to report child protection cases which are beyond resolution by the school (which all schools are legally required to do in Qatar). The PSRC can also be visited in person at its headquarters in Doha or at one of its numerous sub-offices.

## **Types of Abuse**

Child abuse most commonly falls into 4 main categories:

### **NEGLECT**

The neglected child carries a sense of worthlessness that is hard to bear. The neglect by parents or guardians causes the bond of trust to be severely damaged and makes home a less stable and happy environment. It is hard for the child to leave this behind when he/she comes to School, and the benefit of School's caring attitude can often be accordingly minimal. A classic symptom is for the child to fail to respond to stimulus in class, however interesting.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

This is not based on denial or neglect but is a more active form of direct abuse. The child is often a scapegoat when things go wrong at home and suffers taunting or derision, instilling a sense that he/she can never do anything right. It should be acknowledged that in the past emotional abuse and neglect have been devices used by weak teachers as a means of control and discipline, belittling a child in front of peers to achieve a result and often denying him/her praise and encouragement. This is the antithesis of good teaching and should be avoided at all times.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

The complexities of this form of abuse are hard to grasp but usually entail the child keeping intolerable secrets, often under threat. The child may not be aware that what is happening to them is abnormal, but the abnormality of his/her behaviour at School may be an indicator of abuse.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

The physically abused child lives with violence and often accepts this as normality. Physically abused children often react defensively to any swift movement made by an adult and may even strike out. The nature of this form of abuse may make it the easier to spot, with the most obvious indicators, sometimes including violence to staff.

### **Action by Staff**

If a member of staff is informed about or believes that a child is being abused s/he must inform the appropriate Safeguarding Lead about it as soon as possible. It is important to stress that confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence.

Any member of staff with such suspicions should record in writing all relevant details, being careful to distinguish between fact and impression. These details will be logged in the School's Safeguarding record files.

The Safeguarding Lead will look into the disclosure further, liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and / or another member of the Safeguarding team, if necessary.

- If the suspicion is unfounded, then the notes taken will be preserved and the member of staff asked to report back to the Safeguarding Lead if there is any further suspicion;
- If the suspicion was probably or definitely well founded, the child should receive protection. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead should refer the matter to the Society for the Protection of Women and Children in Qatar as soon as possible (certainly within 24 hours of the allegation or reported suspicion being made);
- If the suspicion was probably or possibly well founded but, while concern remains, there is nothing tangible with which to take the matter further then a close eye will be kept on the child, observing any changes in behaviour or any other abnormality. However, guidance may be sought from Social Services, notwithstanding the lack of tangible evidence.

Everybody should remember that this is a very serious matter. The consequences of a failure to take action or of taking precipitate action based on malicious or unwarranted allegations are severe.

### **Alleged Child Abuse by a Member of Staff**

If there is cause for a member of staff to be formally investigated for an alleged act of abuse, the member of staff will be suspended from duty. In cases where abuse is proved to have occurred, the member of staff may face prosecution, as well as formal disciplinary proceedings. The DfE in the UK will also be informed, where appropriate, and the School is aware of its statutory obligation to report instances of misconduct by teachers (Regulation 7 of the Education [Particulars of Independent Schools] Regulations 1982).

## **Safeguarding Support Organisations**

The School Counsellor put together an overview sheet showing names of organisations in Qatar that can support schools with safeguarding next steps. This is an editable document; over time, organisation names can be added (and removed). The direct link here: [Safeguarding](#) It has been saved in: **Sherb-Prep / 2. Admin / Pastoral / Safeguarding**



## **Appointing Staff**

The School will act in accordance with the law and follow the Safer Recruitment Guidelines in carrying out thorough checks on the suitability of all staff prior to appointment for the responsibilities they are to undertake. The School will confirm that a prospective employee is not listed as 'a person unsuited to working with either children or young persons'. Checks will be made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or the Police from the most recent country of residence. The Principal, Headmaster and Deputy Head have completed the safer recruitment course.

## **Intimate Care Policy**

### **Introduction**

Staff who work with young children or children who have special needs will realise that the issue of intimate care is a difficult one and will require staff to be respectful of children's needs. Children are generally more vulnerable than adults and staff involved with any aspect of pastoral care need to be sensitive to their individual needs. Parents are required to complete an Intimate Care Agreement when their child joins EYFS.

Intimate care may be defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities can include:

- Feeding;
- Oral care;
- Washing;
- Changing clothes;
- Toileting and menstrual care;
- First aid and medical assistance;
- Supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Parents have a responsibility to advise the school of any known intimate care needs relating to their child.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at our school work in partnership with parents to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Staff deliver a full personal safety curriculum, as part of Personal, Social and Health Education, to all children as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.

Sherborne Qatar School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. All staff recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

### **Our approach**

All children who require intimate care are treated respectfully at all times; each child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

As a basic principle, children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can.

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child needs help with intimate care. Where possible, one child will be cared for by one adult who is well known to the child and the child's parents unless there is a sound reason for having two adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented.

Parents will always be informed after intimate care has been provided to a child (either verbally or in writing) and this will take place as soon as possible after the care has been provided (and must happen on the same day).

### **The Protection of Children**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures will be accessible to staff and parents and will always be adhered to.

Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to a Safeguarding Lead. A clear record of the concern will be completed and will be referred to the appropriate external agency(ies) if the school Safeguarding Panel considers this to be an appropriate course of action.

Parents will be informed that a referral is being made unless doing so unless it is judged that doing so would be likely to place the child at greater risk of harm.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the child's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed as detailed in the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection policies and procedures.

## Guidance for Parent Helpers

*This document is given to parent helpers and they are required to sign it to indicate that they have read and understood it.*

Parent helpers are welcomed at Sherborne Qatar to help with activities, reading, educational visits and our special curriculum days. Parent help greatly enhances children's learning and we appreciate this contribution.

Alongside the benefits and fun that helping in school can bring there are serious professional issues that we, as a school, have to deal with and to bring to your attention. Before volunteering we ask you to consider the following:

Most importantly the School needs to be absolutely sure that you will respect confidentiality and that you will not pass on any information about an individual child's learning or behaviour or school information to other parents.

You may be allocated across a year group and not necessarily to your child's class.

Any significant comments a child may make to you and any concerns that you may have are to be reported to the Form Teacher only.

For reasons of confidentiality and consistency you will not be allowed access to pupil records electronically or in paper format.

It is essential to avoid being alone with a child away from other adults.

Parent helpers are not allowed into any pupil toilet blocks or PE changing-rooms.

On school trips the trip leader will outline expectations of behaviour clearly and also outline health and safety issues from time to time. Parent helpers are asked to follow the trip leader's guidance at all times.

We are very grateful for your help and enthusiasm and the time you give to school. We hope it will be a pleasant experience and together we can enrich the children's learning.

I have read this policy and agree to follow it. I have received a copy of the Child Protection Guidelines.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Son/daughter's name and form: \_\_\_\_\_

Helping in Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Colleagues

I hope your mornings are going well so far.

Following on from our Away Day, I met this morning with Ms Al Jawhara Al Thani, the Director of Child Protection and Safeguarding in Qatar Foundation. Al Jawhara shared many resources and insights, most of which I have highlighted below, (I am sorry if you know most of these organisations already but thought I would share anyway):

- <https://almeezan.qa/Default.aspx> - **Qatar Legal Portal** – a portal for all Qatar’s laws stated, of which several refer to children and safeguarding, custody law etc.
- <https://www.sidra.org/clinics-services/childrens-and-young-people/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services/> - **Sidra Hospital CAMHS** – we can directly refer into their services (We know of this service already)
- <http://www.qatarsocial.org/En/Pages/QSWHomepage.aspx> - **Qatar Social** - all aspects of “social care” including:
  - <http://www.wifaq.org.qa/en/Pages/default.aspx> – **Wifaq** – Family Consulting Centre – Al Jawhara stated that this centre has been a very big support in aiding parents who are going through divorce and custody battles
  - <http://www.aman.org.qa/En/Pages/Home.aspx> - **Aman** - protection of women and children who are victims of violence or break up
- <https://covid19.moph.gov.qa/EN/Mental-Health/Pages/default.aspx> - The old Covid Hotline number (16000) is the new National Mental Health Hotline – press Option 4 and this is targeted for children 18 and under
- <https://sehanafsia.moph.gov.qa/english/pages/default.aspx> - **Young Mind Matters** – Resources for mental health
- <https://www.imaginablefutures.com/partners/rapid-ec/> - Research from the US which was undertaken during and after the pandemic
- <https://www.end-violence.org/members/international-society-prevention-child-abuse-and-neglect-ispcan> - the **ISPCAN conference** was held here in 2020 and following on from that they produced a National Workflow document for child abuse, which is currently still being worked on nationally

Al Jawhara shared that there is a national strategy being worked on at the moment regarding mental health as well as groups of professionals working towards a national strategy for child protection, which is very promising.

She is hoping to set up a series of “Speaker Talks” during this year with key professionals sharing what they are currently developing as well as sharing practice.

One thing I asked her about was this idea of us employing our own safeguarding lead person – she said she herself is even finding this hard regarding trying to recruit a Qatari national; she suggested that the most important aspect is employing someone who is “Culturally Literate” and has that awareness of the local community without any prejudices and cultural biases. So, this could be something we explore further? It would help us in regards to referrals that may be needed, as many of the organisations listed above, even though they state are dual language speakers, often whoever picks up the phone is an Arabic speaker. That person could also then link in with the organisations to build the relationships and know exactly who to contact if needed.

Perhaps, we can discuss this at our next Heads meeting?