

The American School in London

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

ASL designated contact people, 2017-18

Designated safeguarding lead: **Robyn Chapel**

Deputy designated safeguarding leads: Patrick Lee, John Farmer,
Cosmo Murphy

Trustee representative: Alison LeMaire

Designated personnel:

Counselors: Aerian Gray, Kelley Reid, Jess Spector, Stephanie Oliver

Psychologists: Helen Jackson, Heather McIntyre

School nurses: Adam Bonnington, Amy Curtis, Victoria Haynes

School administrators:

Robin Appleby, Jack Phillips, Peter Lutkoski, Sacha McVean, Karen
Bon throne, Katie Shefren, Patrick Lee, Chris Almond, Robyn Chapel, Jim
Heynderickx, Nadjib Aktouf, Beth Crutcher

Scope

There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
They are:

- arrangements to take all reasonable measures to ensure that risk of harm to children's welfare is minimized; and
- arrangements to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

This document describes the arrangements ASL has in place to provide for both aspects of safeguarding. The measures described in this policy should be applied in all settings, including professional and personal interactions with students and primary carers and are relevant to all adults who are in contact with children directly or indirectly and who undertake paid or regular volunteer work for ASL, or deliver services as part of a contractual agreement with an external organization. For the purposes of this document, this group of individuals is referred to by the term 'employees.'

The procedures in this policy have been approved by the Head of School and the Board of Trustees.

Policy

At the American School in London, we believe that the purpose of education is to challenge all students to develop to their fullest intellectual, social, emotional and physical potential. Understanding that children learn and grow best within a caring and supportive framework, we undertake to create a school that models responsible personal and social behavior and keeps students free from the fear of any kind of abuse or neglect, and enables them to experience the fulfillment that comes from actively participating in a learning community.

All ASL employees are required, without exception, to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to one of the designated personnel within the School. The designated person will liaise with the school's designated safeguarding lead and can consult directly with and make referrals to the appropriate Children's Services in the relevant borough. All designated persons have additional information to assist in the assessment of suspected abuse. The requirements of ASL employees are derived from UK laws and required guidance.

All ASL employees are expected to be familiar with statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education: for school and college staff (part 1),' September 2016.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

There have been some minor changes to the wording of these definitions, which appear in 'Working together to safeguard children,' March 2015

What is 'abuse' and 'neglect'?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a familial or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a primary carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional

development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing the child or ridiculing what s/he says or how s/he communicates. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur on its own.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a primary carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions based on those in 'Working together to safeguard children,'
March 2015

Children missing from school

If a child stops attending school, the division will inform the designated safeguarding lead and the borough in which the child resides. Children missing from education may be an indicator of maltreatment. In addition, each division monitors student attendance on a daily basis and works with individual families if a child misses too much school.

Radicalization, extremism and the Prevent Duty

The designated senior lead has completed Prevent awareness training and is trained to offer advice and support to faculty and staff.

The School takes a proactive stance to fostering the social and emotional health of all children. Our K-12 pastoral care system (Responsive Classroom K-4 and advisories in the Middle and High schools) ensures that all children are connected to adults and peers and feel included and known.

Additionally, all faculty and staff foster the attributes of the ASL Portrait of the Learner.

The School is equipped to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalization. We monitor students who might be at risk. If a student is identified, s/he is referred to the divisional child protection team. If the concern escalated after appropriate interventions at the School and family level, the designated safeguarding lead would be notified and s/he may decide to refer the case to Channel, the multi-agency panel in the Tri-borough dedicated to preventing radicalization and extremism.

Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) must be reported to the Local Authority Children's Services. In addition, it is the obligation of all faculty and staff to report any case of FGM to the Police in the area in which the child resides. The report may be oral or written. When reported, the individual reporting should be given a reference number, which s/he must record. Additionally, the family of the girl should be contacted to explain the report unless it is believed that doing so may result in risk of serious harm or the family fleeing the country.

If the faculty or staff member did not learn about the case of FGM directly, but rather received the information from a third party, s/he will follow child protection procedures and report the suspected case to the designated safeguarding lead. In either case, the designated safeguarding lead must be made aware.

Forced marriage

The School understands that it has an obligation to report any case or suspected case of forced marriage to Westminster or the borough in which the child resides.

Child sexual exploitation

The School understands that it has an obligation to report any case or suspected case of child sexual exploitation to Westminster City Council Children's Services or the borough in which the child resides. In some cases, there may be a need to report directly to the Police. The normal child protection reporting procedures are followed. Signs of possible child sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to, suspected intimate relations with an adult, inappropriate online presence, changes in appearance and behavior. The School educates children in the dangers of online contact with strangers through its digital literacy curriculum.

Children missing from education

ASL is committed to ensuring all students attend school regularly through divisional attendance policies and daily attendance procedures. The School reports weekly to Local Authorities (LA) any children who have withdrawn that week.

Specific safeguarding issues

The School understands there are additional and multiple safeguarding issues to which the School must actively attend and educate students. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse, specifically, but not limited to, bullying, gender-based violence, sexting, and sexual assaults. The School has clear policies in divisional handbooks and school-wide policies on bullying and technology use. 'Keeping children safe in education,' (September 2016), specifically refers to a multitude of safeguarding issues and serves as a source of guidance.

Online safety

The School understands its vital role in protecting students from and educating students about the areas of risk: content, contact and conduct. At school, there are filters and monitoring systems in place to reduce the risk of illegal, inappropriate or harmful material. Each division has specific guidelines for technology use for students; online safety is part of the technology, information literacy and media standards. The School also conducts parent and student education workshops throughout the year.

Children staying with host families

Students are housed with host families overseas when suitable.

Understanding that the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas, the School works with the partner school to ensure that proper checks have taken place.

WHEN TO REPORT

An indicator of suspected abuse or neglect is, for example, disclosure by the child to a friend, classmate, teacher or other trusted adult. Other factors such as unexplained injuries and implausible explanations, changes in behavior or emotional state may be causes for concern. Additionally, employees do not need absolute proof to make a report to a designated person. If an employee has ‘reasonable cause’ or ‘reasonable suspicion’ based on his/her knowledge of the student or personal experience with children, the employee should act in good faith and speak to a designated person.

When abuse or maltreatment is suspected, it is important that employees listen carefully to students, giving them the time they need to talk about what happened to them and how they are feeling about it. Questions can include:

What, if anything, happened?
Who was involved?
When did it happen?
Where did it happen?

Questions should be limited to clarifying basic information only, in order to help determine whether a referral should be made. It is important for employees not to ask children leading questions. The child may respond to these questions with additional detailed information. It is reasonable to allow the child to do so and come to a natural pause. Provided the employee hasn’t sought the additional information, this is unlikely to undermine any future investigation.

However, it is not the responsibility of employees in the School to investigate or prove suspected abuse.

REPORTING PROCEDURE AT ASL

1. Employees who have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment *must* notify a designated person, as soon as possible and within two hours. The designated person will make a written log of concerns.
2. The designated person will confer with the designated safeguarding lead and inform the divisional principal and the Head of School. The school nurse may be consulted. The designated person will inform the reporting employee as to the plan of action, while respecting the confidentiality of the family. The reporting employee is expected to honor the sensitivity and the confidentiality of the information. Information about actual or suspected maltreatment and any associated plans will be shared within the ASL on a strict ‘need to know’ basis.

3. The designated person may consult with a Westminster Child Protection Advisor, as an anonymous, hypothetical case, as appropriate.

4. If a referral is made to Children's Services, a social worker will be assigned. The designated person will confirm with the social worker what the primary carer is to be told, when, and by whom. If the child is not at risk from his/her primary carers, the primary carers should **usually** be notified of the concern. However, in the early stages of a sexual abuse investigation, primary carers are not informed. This needs to be confirmed with the local area social worker.

5. If Westminster's Children's Services advises ASL to report the case, the designated person will report the case to the relevant borough's Children's Services Assessment Team. This is done in the presence of a school administrator or the designated safeguarding lead.

The responsibility for investigation normally falls to the borough in which the child resides. If the child does not reside in Westminster, and if there is a dispute with regard to jurisdiction, the School has the right, under the London Child Protection Procedures, to request the case be referred to Westminster (the borough in which the School is located), who will endeavor to resolve the dispute about responsibility. Should an allegation be made against an ASL employee, the designated person contacts the designated officer (formerly known as the 'LADO') in Westminster City Council. In addition, the designated person will complete and sign a written report within 48 hours (preferably within 24 hours) and send it to the Children's Services in the relevant borough. The report will be held in the strictest of confidence.

6. A copy of the report will be held in a locked cabinet in the office of the designated safeguarding lead, who will serve as the main key holder. Designated personnel will have access to the key in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead. A note making reference to there being additional confidential information about the student with the designated safeguarding lead will be included in the confidential Student Support Services Team database and a colored sticker will be placed in the front of the student's confidential school file, which is held in the divisional office.

7. If the designated person believes that a child's life or health is in imminent danger, s/he should contact the emergency services (dial 999).

8. If a child is not in urgent need of emergency services, then action will be taken by the Children's Services in the relevant borough to ensure the child's immediate safety. This could include an application to court for an order or police power of protection. This is used when there is thought to be an immediate serious risk to the child and is not used routinely.

9. In the case of an allegation of abuse against employees, the Head of School will consult with Westminster City Council's designated officer immediately, and follow their recommendations. In the case of a whistleblower reporting an allegation of abuse against a designated person, the Head of School will similarly consult with the designated officer in Westminster City Council. In the case of an allegation against the Head of School, the Board of Trustees would consult immediately with the designated officer in Westminster City Council. It should be noted that should an allegation of abuse be made against an employee that results in an in-house disciplinary procedure, there may also be a child protection investigation, and/or a criminal investigation process. The police investigation will take precedence over the internal disciplinary investigations.

10. The School has a duty to refer relevant information to Westminster's LSCB and, when appropriate, the Disclosure and Barring Service so that any individual who poses a threat to children can be identified and barred from working with children. In such instances, the individual would have been deemed to have:

- a) engaged in 'relevant conduct,' which is defined as conduct that:
 - is likely to endanger a child
 - involves sexual material relating to children
 - involves sexually violent images
 - is of a sexual nature involving a child as defined in Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and
- b) satisfied the 'harm test.' The harm test is satisfied if there is evidence that the person has:
 - harmed a child
 - caused a child to be harmed
 - put a child at risk of harm
 - incited another to harm a child.

The School has a legal duty to refer if an individual is cautioned or convicted of an offence that satisfies the 'relevant offence test' as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006.

11. If a student withdraws from ASL, the School is obliged by law to pass along to the student's new school all relevant information kept on file. This will include confidential information related to safeguarding concerns or activity.

12. If any member of the school community feels that the school is not doing due diligence in its safeguarding responsibilities, they can speak directly and anonymously to NSPCC on their advice line 0800 028 0285.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the Department for Education (DfE), all schools in the UK, including independent schools such as ASL, are expected to follow child abuse reporting procedures as outlined above. Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the School. It is not the responsibility of employees in the School to investigate suspected abuse. The School should not take action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by the LSCB. ASL's local LSCB is Westminster.

Failure to respond appropriately to a suspicion or disclosure of child abuse could be construed as willful misconduct or gross negligence. ASL aims to work cooperatively with Westminster's Children's Services or the relevant protective agency with respect to advice, reporting and investigation.

RECRUITMENT

Essential information about safer recruitment is contained in of 'Keeping children safe in education: safer recruitment, (part 3),' September 2016. The School operates safe recruitment procedures and it is essential that all appropriate checks are carried out on new employees and volunteers who will work with children. Safe recruitment practice means conducting interviews that explore a candidate's suitability to work with children and young people, scrutinizing applications for discrepancies, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and making sure a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. The School makes checks against the Disclosure and Barring Service for all employees and regular volunteers. Individuals who have recently arrived in the UK, or whose last period of employment working with children was overseas, must provide a background check from the country where they were previously living/working. Further guidance is available from the personnel manager.

TRAINING

1. Child Protection Training is MANDATORY for all ASL employees and regular volunteers, and is a condition of employment at ASL. Initial training sessions are offered at various times during the academic year for new employees.
2. All other employees working with children undertake training on an annual basis that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out

their responsibilities for child protection, and temporary employees and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities. This training will be contracted and provided by child protection advisors including members of the City of Westminster Safeguarding and Quality Assurance team.

3. In addition to basic child protection training, the designated persons undertake training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards set by, the LSCB and refresher training at two-year intervals to maintain their knowledge and skills.

SUMMARY

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection policy and procedures are remedied without delay, and the Head organizes an annual review of the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and how the above duties have been discharged.

For detailed procedures regarding the reporting and investigation of child abuse, please refer to the following documents, which are on file with the designated safeguarding lead.

1. 'London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance,' *5th edition, 2015*
2. 'Working together to safeguard children,' *7th edition, March 2015*
3. 'What to do if you think a child is being abused,' *March 2015*
4. 'Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges,' *September 2016*

Please also refer to the following documents in ASL's forms and documents:

1. *ASL Standards for Safe Working Practices*
2. *Possible Signs of Abuse*
3. *Responsible Use Agreement*
4. *High School Responsible Use Agreement*
5. *Middle School Responsible Use Policy*
6. *Lower School Responsible Use Agreement (K-Grade 2 and Grades 3-4)*
7. *Web Publishing Guidelines*
8. *Social Media Guidelines*

Approved, 28 September 2016

Revised, 10 July 2017

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.