

## Safeguarding: A Shared Responsibility

*Article contributed by Mr. Tom Woods, Primary Deputy Principal*

At Victoria Shanghai Academy (VSA) the health, safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. VSA aims to provide a secure environment for children to learn. At VSA, we believe that all forms of abuse are unacceptable and therefore regard the safeguarding of students as an extremely high priority. The school takes all allegations of child abuse seriously and is committed to working on preventing it in all its forms. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all stakeholders within the school community.

This article should be read in conjunction with the [VSA Safeguarding Policy](#). The procedures in this policy align with the international statutory standards and guidelines and legislation in Hong Kong. Hong Kong acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1994. This policy is based on the principles of the UNCRC with the aim of affirming the rights of all children at VSA to be protected.

Child abuse can be defined as the harming (whether physically, psychologically, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person by any other person, not necessarily an adult or caregiver. The VSA Safeguarding Policy sets out definitions of abuse as well as listing some indicators that these types of abuse may be occurring. The policy also contains a large section about peer-on-peer abuse which is one of the most prevalent types of abuse in our society.

VSA has appointed two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) who are responsible for leading the implementation of the VSA Safeguarding Policy. DSL's have the overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and have the appropriate authority and training to undertake such a role. They are able to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. DSL's plan and coordinate safeguarding training for all members of the VSA community.



Primary – Mr. Tom Woods



Secondary – Ms. Lesley Harrison

The school ensures that allegations of abuse are investigated and that action is taken to ensure that the school is a safe environment for the child / children involved. Upon receipt of an allegation of abuse, the DSL will ensure that they follow the procedures as set out by the VSA Safeguarding Policy.

When any member of the school community suspects an incident of child abuse has occurred or has received an allegation of such abuse, he / she must report this to the DSL immediately. The policy contains detailed guidelines about how to approach conversations with children / young people if they do disclose about abuse.

The DSL carries out an initial assessment. If a risk of abuse is present, the DSL should report the allegation to the Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) of the Social Welfare Department

(SWD) for investigation. The policy has a detailed description of what contact is deemed as acceptable and unacceptable between adult-adult and adult-child in different scenarios.

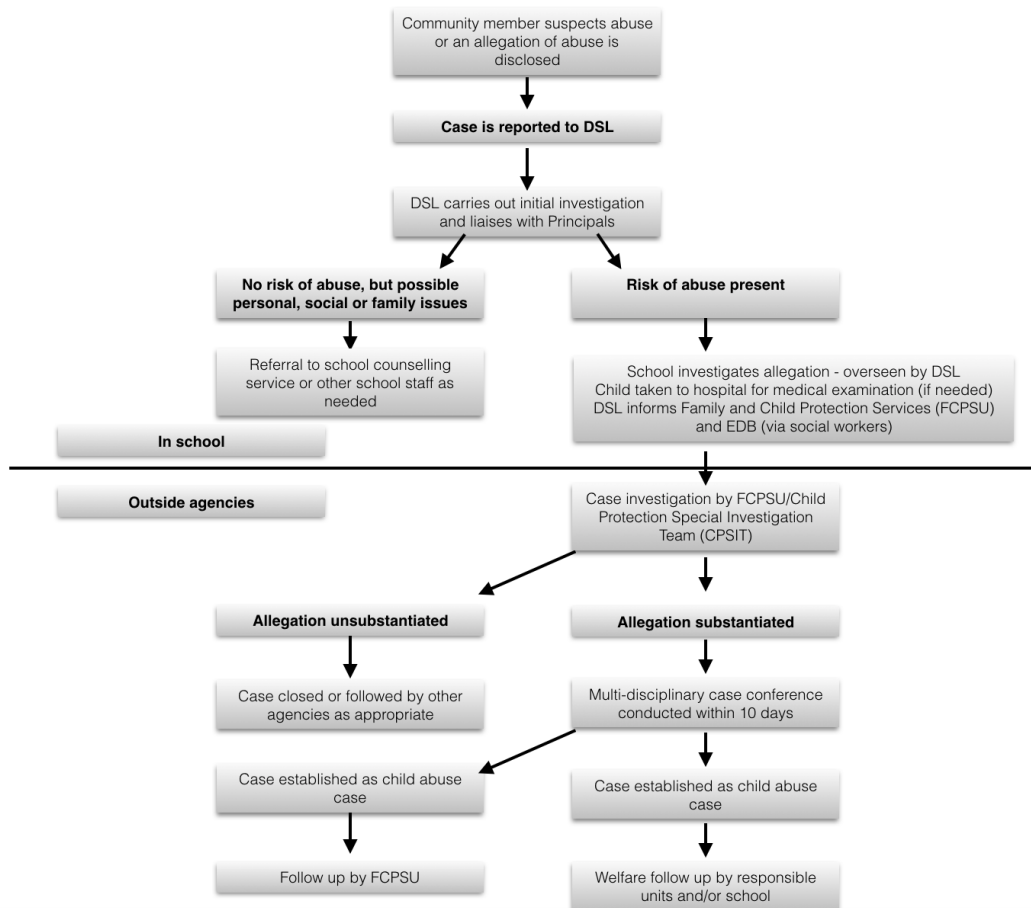


Figure 1: Flow chart depicting handling of allegations

VSA communicates its dedicated approach to safeguarding through various platforms. Large banners in the main lobby and safeguarding posters in the lifts provide members of the school community as well as visitors key information about safeguarding. This information is also communicated through the school website and Primary Student Handbook. The aim is to send a clear and consistent message to any members of visitors of the VSA community that we are a school who takes safeguarding seriously.



**滬江維多利亞學校**  
VICTORIA SHANGHAI ACADEMY

# SAFEGUARDING

As an adult on campus with children and young people, you have a duty to act when you have a concern about a child's safety

**Who can potentially harm a child**

- Family member
- Another child
- Stranger
- Member of staff
- Helper
- Driver
- Anyone

**When to be concerned**

- If you see physical signs
- If you see emotional distress
- If you notice changes in behaviour
- If a child discloses something to you
- If you have a sense that something is not right
- If you think a child is being bullied

**If a child discloses...**

- Listen carefully and don't interrupt
- Reassure, be calm and attentive and don't judge
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Ask questions only if clarification is necessary and ensure they are non-leading
- Write it down using the child's words and anything that concerned you afterwards, include dates and times, sign and date the document
- Share this information with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible

**What will VSA do?**

- Recognise you and the DSL's concern be confidential
- Manage the process confidentially
- Protect and support the individual raising the concern

**Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

<b>Primary</b> Ms. Tam Woods (twoods@vsa.edu.hk)	<b>Secondary</b> Ms. Lesley Hartman (lhartman@vsa.edu.hk)
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**Remember**

- Safeguarding of a child is your first priority
- School staff are often the first people to see children after abuse
- Not all abuse has physical signs
- You must report any concerns without delay, regardless of the source
- Delay in reporting could cause the child greater harm
- If in any doubt, talk to our DSLs

**“Child Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility”**

Child Safeguarding Policy

Relevant aspects of safeguarding are delivered through the curriculum. Content is delivered in a developmentally appropriate way, including:

- recognising that abuse may be taking place
- protecting oneself from abuse
- reporting abuse safely
- peer on peer abuse
- protecting oneself online, social networking and sexting

Relevant content is delivered as part of the Wellbeing Curriculum in the primary section, and through Flex (PSHE & Digital Life) in the secondary section.

The school has rigorous systems for completing background checks on current and prospective employees. For prospective employees, Human Resources Officers will obtain two satisfactory reference checks from the candidates' previous school and make sure he/she fulfills the police check requirements. Teachers already residing in Hong Kong need to carry out a Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC) to be carried out by the Hong Kong Police Force. All teaching staff will be required to provide background checks for all countries they have lived for longer than 6 months since the age of 18 following the Council of International Schools Criminal Background Checks Procedures.

All members of the school community will be informed about the school's Safeguarding Policy. New teachers are required to complete a safeguarding training course as part of the school's induction process. Existing teachers and other staff will receive safeguarding training once per year.

Parents who volunteer to attend field trips or help out with various activities on campus will be given an overview of the school's safeguarding procedures by one of the DSLs.



**Do** ✓

Contact the class teacher as soon as possible, if you are encountering difficulties. Please do not let children run and shout.  
如閣下遇上任何困難/問題，請盡快通知有關的班主任，請不要讓同學嬉鬧奔跑及喧嘩。

Take the whole group to the toilet and wait outside.  
如所有小朋友要上洗手間，全體須一起前往。

**Do not** ✗

Have long conversations on your mobile.  
長時間使用手提電話。

Purchase any food / sweets / ice-cream for the students.  
給小朋友購買食物、糖果和雪糕。

**Do not** ✗

Take photos of children on your phone or personal device. Please use school iPad provided to you.  
使用個人或非學校提供之電子器材拍攝活動照片。

Give any gifts to the children.  
給小朋友送禮物。

**Do** ✓

Keep your group together at all times. Please stay with your group.  
任何時間都要跟隨老師的小朋友一起。

Be an inquirer and have an active role on the field trip. Be sure any work given by the teacher is completed.  
留意環境、主動參與、確保保學完成所有老師派發的工作。

**Parent Volunteer Handbook**  
家長義工手冊

**Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

**Primary**  
Mr. Tom Woods  
(twoods@vsa.edu.hk)

**Secondary**  
Ms. Lesley Harrison  
(lharrison@vsa.edu.hk)

Tel: (852) 3402 1100

Thank you for joining us and being such exemplary risk-takers on our trip. We do sincerely appreciate your help. Please feel free to contact the class teachers should you require further information.  
最後，我們再次帶拍感謝你的對今次活動，當協助活動進行，如有任何疑問，歡迎隨時與班主任查詢。

VSA believes that if the entire school community is aware of the safeguarding systems and procedures we have in place, we can together create a secure learning environment where students are happy and safe.

*“Child Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility”.*