

Bishop's College School



Child Protection Policy

This policy was adopted for the first time by the Senior Administration on Nov 26, 2019.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

“We create a caring community of learning and development where cultures connect and individuals matter. Our commitment to excellence in academics, wellness, athletics, creativity, and service contributes to a lifetime of engagement and global competence.”

THE BCS COMMUNITY

Above all else, it is expected that students will behave in a civil manner at all times, in a way that will bring credit to both themselves and BCS.

BCS is committed to ensuring a community that is collegial and where students, employees, and volunteers may work in an atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination, intimidation, and abuse of any sort.

This commitment also implies that emotional or physical abuse will not be tolerated and that any behavior intended to intimidate, degrade, or create an unsafe environment will be subject to disciplinary action and possibly even criminal charges when required.

The BCS Harassment Policy follows Bill 56, which clearly defines inappropriate behavior and the steps one should take if they believe themselves to have been harassed.

BCS reserves the right to search any student’s room, locker, or possessions if a student is suspected of having contravened school policy.

Please note: these expectations also apply to all student trips (academic, athletic, and extracurricular) and activities both on and off campus, including travel to and from school.

AIMS

Parents entrust the school and its staff to take care of their children. The entire educational community that comprises BCS is responsible for the wellness of the students in its custody and to provide the education and reasonable care as stipulated in our binding contracts.

The purpose of the current policy is to provide guidelines for the application of such a responsibility and to define the obligations that BCS has towards its pupils. This policy also defines preventive actions taken by the school in order to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

WELLNESS

Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward, a complete and fulfilling life. Wellness at BCS is measured by six (6) dimensions: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and environmental. At BCS, the well-being of all our students is one of our top priorities. To this end, the school provides care and health services, as well as a broad range of challenging/creative activities that promote growth and development. BCS is also strongly committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all its members. Everyone in our community deserves respect, consideration, and empathy.

STUDENT SERVICES

Medical Services

A registered nurse lives on campus and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The nurse can be reached every day from 8 AM to 4:30 PM at the infirmary. Students do not need an appointment to see the nurse during office hours, and the nurse is available after hours for emergencies. A doctor is on call for scheduled appointments. The nurse supplies information on various topics (including health, sports injuries, influenza season, sex education, mental health, etc.), as well as health evaluations and doctor referrals.

School Counsellor

The counselor can be reached Monday to Friday during class time from 8:50 AM to 4:30 PM in SH111. Appointments can be made in person or by email. If preferred, referrals to other professionals can also be arranged. The counselor is available after hours for emergencies. The counselor provides psychological help and support (breakups, homesickness, conflict solving, bullying, stress management, etc.), as well as career orientation, testing, and academic help.

Physiotherapy

Our physiotherapist and athletic therapist are available during the week and at major athletic events, as well as all home athletic events. The Physiotherapy Office is located in the athletic complex off the weight room. The physiotherapist assesses, treats, and evaluates orthopedic injuries. All students have access to physiotherapy services.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Any student, aged fourteen and older, who approaches a health professional for assistance in connection with any issue or concern is assured of confidentiality. Unless specifically authorized by the student, the health professional will not inform the student's parents or other BCS employees of any disclosure made by the student when seeking assistance. The only exception to this is if the physical welfare of the individual or another person is at risk. Any faculty member approached by a student for assistance may consult with BCS health professionals if they are concerned for the health and well-being of the student. The faculty member is not obliged to disclose the identity of the student. Health professionals have the right to consult with each other while protecting the anonymity of the student. By law, health professionals and BCS employees must inform appropriate authorities in cases of potential self-harm, harm to others, physical or mental abuse, in cases where the physical or psychological integrity is at risk, or in response to any court order.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Bishop's College School is committed to an environment free of objectionable, disrespectful conduct, and communication that creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive climate, or interferes with work performance. BCS prohibits harassment by and against employees and students. In 2012, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously adopted an Act to Prevent and Stop Bullying and Violence in Schools (Bill 56). Consequently, Bishop's College School has created a comprehensive description of the measures taken following a harassment or bullying incident. These measures are detailed in our Student Handbook, available online. In

accordance with the government, Bishop's College School defines bullying as any repeated direct behavior, comment, act, or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including cyberspace (texts, photos, videos messages), which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and that causes distress, injury, hurt, oppression, intimidation, or ostracization.

Violence is considered any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological, or sexual force, which causes distress and/or injury, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property. Harassment is a form of discrimination, which is against the law under the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Quebec Human Rights Code. It involves any unwanted physical, verbal, or social behaviour that offends or humiliates a person, including on-line harassment, derogatory language, innuendo, or taunting about a person's body, race, gender, language, attire, sexual orientation or religion. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over a period of time.

A serious one-time incident can also be considered harassment (chrc-ccdp.ca). The school will implement any correctional or punitive action, reporting to the authorities, or expulsion as it deems necessary.

CHILD ABUSE

Under the Quebec Youth Protection Act, which is in line with the World Health Organization's definition, maltreatment includes situations where the security or development of a child is considered to be in danger, if the child is abandoned or neglected, subjected to psychological ill treatment, or sexual and physical abuse. The current policy is in complete accord with the Quebec Child Protection Act¹, and the definitions provided by *La Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*.²

OBLIGATIONS OF EACH BCS EMPLOYEE

- All employees have the responsibility of monitoring and observing changes in behaviour or performance that may indicate abuse.
- All employees have the obligation of listening and believing any student coming forth with a complaint or a concern and of keeping all aspects of the conversation confidential.
- All employees also have the obligation of reporting, in all confidentiality and in writing (using the form provided in this document, see **Annex B**), to the proper authority at the school (see diagram in **Annex A**), all situations of abuse and/or neglect.
- All employees have the obligation to provide reasonable care and to provide for all fundamental needs that a child requires, understanding that those needs vary according to each individual, and this in accordance with the Child Protection Act of this province, to all children in the care of BCS.
- All employees are required in their actions with, and their treatment of, students to act ethically and within the boundaries of their professional obligations. The guidelines described in **Annex C** set what is acceptable; professional conduct is expected towards

¹ <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowTdm/cs/P-34.1?langcont=en>

² <http://www.cdpedj.qc.ca/en/droits-de-la-personne/vos-droits-au-quebec/Pages/enfants.aspx>

our students. Any employee who does not follow these guidelines will put themselves in a position to be subject to disciplinary action.

RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE

The main situations that are considered abuse are:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse

Signs and Symptoms

All employees are particularly well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and the unexplained changes in behavior or performance that may indicate abuse.

I. Neglect

Neglect occurs when parents/custodians fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their child, such as food, clothing, and medical care. Lack of supervision or care can also be considered situation of neglect. The laws in this province prescribe supervision “at all times” of pupils who are underage. To that effect, a series of attendance and check-ins are implemented within the routine of all students. Abandonment is considered a form of neglect. BCS also extends this prescription to students who are of adult age.

Signs or symptoms that **may** possibly indicate neglect:

- Hunger
- Tiredness
- Improper hygiene
- Consistently inappropriately dressed for the weather
- Absenteeism or frequent tardiness
- Negative attention-seeking behavior
- Untreated illnesses, physical or psychological
- Stealing compulsively
- Failure to grow intellectually or socially
- Withdrawal, depression

II. Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is any attempt to physically harm, injure, or threaten the well-being of an individual. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, giving substances that can be harmful or against one’s will, and depriving someone of sleep, food, or other basic physical needs. It also includes giving a child drugs, alcohol, or any tobacco/vaping products.

Signs or symptoms that **may** indicate physical abuse:

- Injuries, bruises, bite marks, burn marks, lacerations
- Self-inflicted injuries, bite marks, burn marks, lacerations
- Inconsistent account of how injuries occurred
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication, or signs of other substance intoxication
- Covering of limbs, even in hot weather

- Fear of going home or parents being contacted
- Fear of medical help
- Fear of changing for Phys. Ed classes
- Inexplicable fear of others, including adults
- Over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others, including bullying

III. Sexual Abuse

In the context of a school in Quebec, Sexual Abuse is the involvement of dependent or underaged children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not fully understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent. In the case of an adult involved with a child/student, there cannot be consent, regardless of any circumstances. This covers the complete range of actions that result in children being used for the sexual gratification of others, including contact and non-contact behaviours, meaning touching genitalia, intercourse, involvement with pornography, indecent exposure, etc. Please refer to the Rights of Children and Youth.³

Signs or symptoms that **may** indicate sexual abuse:

- Sexually-explicit behaviour or age-inappropriate behaviour
- Reluctance to go home
- Inability to concentrate, tiredness
- Refusal to communicate
- Thrush or other infections
- Persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- Eating disorders
- Attention-seeking behavior, including sexual harassment or molestation
- Unusually compliant
- Touching others inappropriately
- Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group
- Reluctance to undress for Phys. Ed. classes or swimming
- Lack of trust in a specific adult

IV. Psychological Abuse

Psychological Abuse is the emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child where constant lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting, shouting, or scapegoating can lead to a child's loss of confidence and self-esteem. It also includes harassment or exclusion with malicious intentions.

Signs and symptoms that **may** indicate psychological abuse:

- Overreaction to mistakes, continual self-devaluation
- Delayed mental/emotional development
- Withdrawal
- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Running away

³ <http://www.cdpedj.qc.ca/en/droits-de-la-personne/vos-droits-au-quebec/Pages/enfants.aspx>
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- Eating disorders

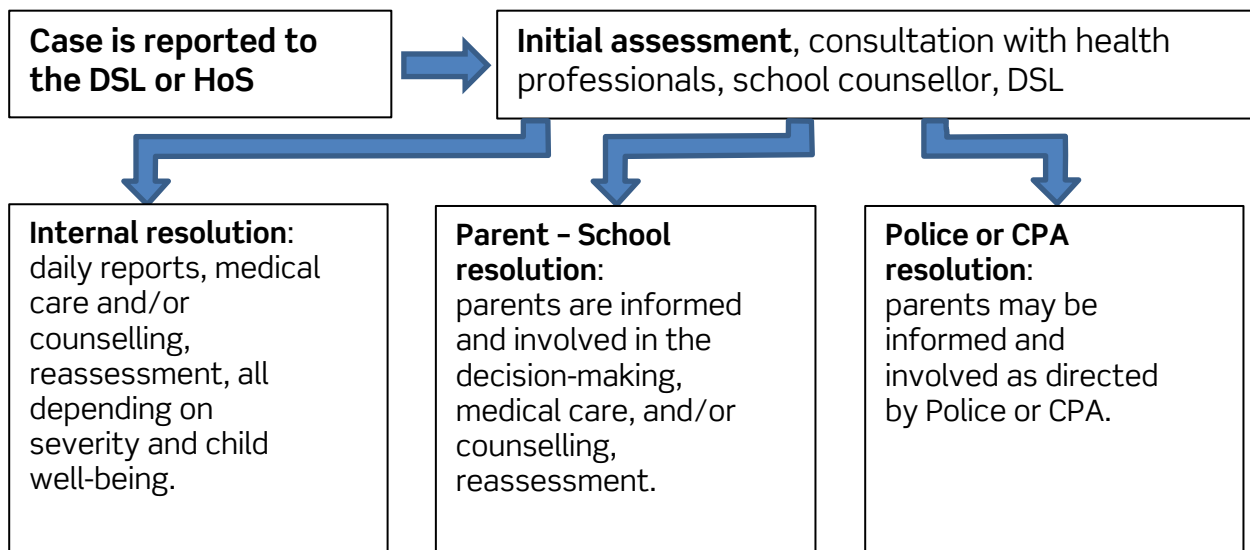
ANNEX A

REPORTING AND ACTION PROCEDURE

If a BCS employee has cause for concern about a student or suspects child abuse, they have an obligation to report it to the appropriate authority. The employee should not share the information with anyone else. This is a highly confidential matter.

In the case of mild concern, any employee can report this concern to the houseparent, a nurse, the school counselor, the Associate Head of School for Student Life (DSL), or the Head of School (HoS).

In the case of a more severe concern or if child abuse is suspected, the employee must report the case immediately to the Associate Head of School for Student Life or to the Head of School. Again, the employee should not share the information with anyone else. Upon reporting the case, the employee will be asked to put their referral in writing, using the form below. The report will be discussed by the Head of the School, who will decide upon any course of action. The police and/or the Child Protection Agency (CPA) may be involved if required.



ANNEX C

Professional Behaviour Guidelines

“Parents often leave their children in the temporary care of a teacher, daycare, summer camp or sports coach. By doing this, they are temporarily delegating their authority as parents. The teacher, childcare worker or monitor gains some control over the child, but also takes on responsibilities.”⁴

While their child is attending BCS, parents entrust the care of said child to the employees of the school. While at school, students are beyond the control and protection of parents and are placed under the care of Faculty and Staff, who can exercise authority over them and who are obligated to provide them with reasonable care and protection from harm.

Furthermore, and following the regulations of the Youth Protection Act⁵, the school and its employees are obligated to treat a child with respect and dignity, and apply all possible measures designed to put an end to, and prevent the recurrence of, any situation in which the security or development of a child is compromised.

To Whom This Applies

This obligation extends to all BCS employees who come into contact with students. This includes administration, faculty, residential staff, non-teaching staff, and volunteers.

BCS, as stipulated by federal and provincial laws, will perform a criminal background check with the context of employment in an institution dealing with vulnerable people or children, which may result in denial of employment.⁶

Expectation of Parents

Within the scope of this policy, parents are entitled to expect the school and its staff to:

- Provide reasonable care to their child
- Protect their child from harm
- Be informed of any incident and provide corrective measures
- Provide adequate supervision for their child
- Treat their child with dignity, respect, and compassion
- Demonstrate professional and appropriate behaviour
- Design, publish, and apply protection and care policies for their child

Guidelines

I. Avoid any actions that may be, or appear to be, of sexual nature

Allegations concerning a BCS employee about inappropriate conduct, action, or behaviour of a sexual nature with a student will result in an investigation by the Head of School. If the allegations are substantiated, there would be grounds for dismissal, suspension, or other serious disciplinary action. Local police will be contacted immediately if the actions are

⁴ Taken from: <https://www.educaloi.qc.ca/en/capsules/legal-responsibilities-educators-caregivers-and-monitors>

⁵ <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/P-34.1>

⁶ For more details, please see: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks>

criminal in nature or suspected to be criminal in nature. The school may also seek legal advice.

Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Sexual abuse of a child
- Sexual activities with a student
- Sexual exhibitionism
- Inappropriate conversations or discussions of a sexual nature with or about a student
- Exposure of students to pornographic material
- Deliberate exposure of students to the sexual behaviour of others
- Obscene language of a sexual nature

II. Appropriate physical contact

As a general guideline, employees should avoid non-essential physical contact with students. It is recognized, however, that some occasional physical contact is appropriate. Such circumstances include, for example, handshaking and coaching students during sports practices. Those contacts should be done only in public within the appropriate context.

There will be times when employees may feel it is appropriate to comfort a student who has come to them in distress, such as extreme homesickness or hearing very sad news. In such circumstances, a hand gently placed on the student's back or shoulder may be both kind and appropriate.

It is important to understand that every child has the right to refuse physical contact and that not all children are comfortable with physical contact. Employees should be aware that students may occasionally misinterpret what is intended to be a kind gesture as having some sexual connotation, particularly if the student has experienced sexual abuse in the past.

Physical contact is often required to assist an injured or sick student. Physical contact should be done with the informed consent of the student unless it is in a life-threatening situation that requires immediate physical contact.

III. Isolation with a student

For the protection of both students and employees, it is not recommended to be alone with a student in a closed room unless there is clear vision possible through a window. A clear exception is applicable and required if a health service is being dispensed to a student, including counseling. The nurses, houseparents, and school counselor are authorized, within the limits of their duties, to be alone with a student when necessary.

IV. Appropriate punishment

The BCS Student Handbook clearly defines all aspects of discipline and potential consequences given to students. At no time should a consequence be corporal or physical punishment, degrading, or humiliating. Having a student do push-ups outside of physical activity or sports-related context, for example, is not an acceptable form of punishment.

The only consequence described in the Student Handbook that involves physical activity is community service hours. In some specific circumstances, a student can be given supervised service hours to perform, usually between 10 to 50. The nature of the work must be such that the student is "repaying" the community (and not an individual) in some form or another. The student has the right to refuse certain types of work but must still perform the required number of hours given.

Students should be aware of school rules and there must be clear consequences when these rules are broken. If this involves consequences, then the individuals involved should understand these consequences and recognize them as appropriate.