



## BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's primary responsibility

### Statement of Intent

The British College of Andorra is committed to building and maintaining a school environment that proactively safeguards our students and promotes their personal growth, wellbeing, and care. This policy outlines the means by which the school establishes a comprehensive and legally compliant approach to safeguarding and child protection.

The Policy and process is guided by the Mission and Values of our school community:

#### BCA Mission

*The British College of Andorra provides opportunities for all our students to achieve academic, artistic and sporting excellence, lasting physical, spiritual and mental health and to be inspired to accomplish personal and professional success.*

#### BCA Values

*We especially value the following in guiding the learning experience and promoting wellbeing at The British College of Andorra:*

- *Communication Skills*
- *Inquisitiveness*
- *Appreciation of Diversity*
- *Ability to Solve Problems*
- *Sense of Responsibility*
- *Commitment to Sustainability*
- *Tenacity*
- *Courage*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Team-working skills*
- *Inventiveness*
- *Compassion*

## Aim of Policy

The BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy sets forth the steps our employees, volunteers, visitors, and externally contracted staff, coaches and occasional workers are required to take in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of students, and to respond promptly and effectively, should abuse or endangerment be observed, suspected, or disclosed. It also outlines the communication and collaboration maintained with parents as regards safeguarding matters.

## Application of Policy

The Policy must be followed by all employees, volunteers, visitors, and externally contracted staff and coaches and occasional workers. Externally contracted staff currently include the school bus drivers and the cleaning staff.

The primary audience of the Policy are the above named, who must be familiar with its purpose and requirements. As such, familiarisation with the Policy forms a key part of the induction of new employees. It is the responsibility of the school to put in place a protocol to notify visitors and occasional workers of the key points and implications of this Policy.

The Policy will also be an important source of information and guidance for parents and students. Sections of the Policy refer to the communication and education offered to parents around child protection themes, as well as to expectations upon students for community safety.

In the case that a parent wishes to raise a safeguarding concern about a student, they should follow the procedures outlined in Section 3.3, but do so verbally or by email message to the appropriate BCA staff member, because parents do not have access to the reporting and recording platform. If a parent has a question or concern about the contents of this policy, or its implementation, they should inform the Principal in the first instance.

There are no school-related situations where the Policy does not apply.

Actions advised or required by a legally authorised higher organisation will supersede the contents of this Policy. Otherwise:

There are no conditions or restrictions to the Policy;

There are no exclusions or special situations to the Policy.

## Policy development

The Policy was developed during the school year 2023-24, extensively updating the previous policy (2021) to reflect current and evolving safeguarding challenges and best practice.

This policy has been developed:

- in alignment with the school's Guiding Statements (see above)
- embracing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- meeting the Criteria for Evaluation of the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS), aligned to the criteria for accreditation of British Schools Overseas (BSO), and following the UK Department for Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges: *"Keeping Children Safe in Education"* (2024)
- using resources and insight shared in the online workshop *"Safeguarding Protocols for Schools based in Spain"* British Council May 2024

- Using resources and insights shared in the online “*Advanced Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads in International Schools (Level 3)*” May 2024, Council of British International Schools (COBIS)
- aligned with the course materials of “*Child Protection Refresher for International Schools 2022*”, Tes Global Ltd. These modules are also used as the basis for annual BCA staff professional development.
- in accordance with the recommendations of the International Task Force on Child Protection,
- informed by and aligned with the legal framework and requirements of Andorra, and the support provided by local agencies concerned with safeguarding and child protection: “*Guia Infancia en Risc*”, Govern d’Andorra, Ministeri d’Afers Socials, Habitatge i Joventut
- further informed by the document “*Protección de la Infancia des de l’Entorn Escolar*”. UNICEF 2021, developed in coordination with The British Council, Madrid.

The procedures for safeguarding at the British College of Andorra are furthermore established in accordance with the following local, national and international legal guidelines and requirements (in the case of Andorran law, the Catalan-language version is the legal reference):

- “*Llei 14/2019, del 15 de febrer, qualificada dels drets dels infants i els adolescents*” (The Qualified Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, 2019):

The Qualified Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, in articles 69 and 70, outlines the process of notification by citizens and notification and referral by professionals with the aim of guaranteeing efficient detection, and the duty of communication upon citizens and professionals so that children and their families receive immediate and specialised attention to address a detected situation.

- Andorran Constitution:

Article 5: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is binding in Andorra.

Article 8.2: All persons have the right to physical and moral integrity. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (in particular):

(Article 3.2) States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her wellbeing, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

(Article 3.3) States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or safeguarding of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

(Article 19) States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

(Article 27.1) States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development

(Article 29.1.a,c) States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, and the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own

This Policy also relates to the following BCA Policies, which are referenced in the Policy Statement as appropriate:

- BCA Admissions Policy
- BCA Anti-Bullying Policy
- BCA Anti-Discrimination Statement
- BCA Behaviour Policy
- BCA Educational Technology Policy
- BCA Field Trip Policy
- BCA Recruitment Policy
- BCA Relationships and Sex Education Policy

#### Publication Information

The Policy is for both internal and external publication (BCA website and Parent Portal)

Effective: September 2024

Supersedes: BCA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2021

Review date: June 2026

Approved by: Principal

### **Policy Statement**

#### **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **1.1 BCA Board**

1. Acts as the legal representative of the school.
2. Ensures that the appointed Principal is fully informed of the responsibilities related to safeguarding, has adequate training and knowledge of the duty to safeguard students, and ensures clearly defined responsibilities for safeguarding.
3. Has responsibility for safeguarding at the governance level.
4. Supports the commitment of the school to safeguarding students in its communications with the BCA community.

## **1.2 School Principal**

1. Ensures that all employees are informed of and have access to the content of the BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
2. Supports all employees in fulfilling their duties under this Policy.
3. Designates appropriate employees to serve on a BCA Safeguarding Team, when convened, and makes provisions for their ongoing training and professional development.
4. Supported by the Board and Head of Administration, consults with school legal advisors when questions pertaining to obligations under Andorran or international law arise.
5. Provides opportunities for all employees to receive regular professional learning on safeguarding procedures, as outlined in section 5.6 of this Policy.
6. Confirms with the Head of Administration that all new employees have completed screening procedures as set out in the BCA Recruitment Policy.
7. Ensures that a protocol is in place to inform visitors to the school, and occasional workers, of the school's commitment to safeguarding, and of the key points and implications of this Policy.
8. Maintains oversight of the school's crisis management/emergency plans and, with the Leadership Team and where appropriate the Board, ensures regular review and revision, and that all employees are informed of and practise these procedures.
9. Informs potential candidates of the duties contained in the BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy when recruiting, and determines their suitability and commitment to safeguarding students.
10. Ensures all employees know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
11. Ensures that the parent community is informed about the BCA's commitment to safeguarding students.
12. Stays informed of ongoing safeguarding cases being addressed by the DSL/DDSL.
13. Provides the final approval when police or emergency personnel must be contacted in order to protect the welfare of a student.
14. Is informed in all cases where an official report is made to Child and Youth Services offices (Servei Especialitzat d'Atenció a la Infància i l'Adolescència, SEAIA)

## **1.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

1. Takes lead responsibility in the school for safeguarding and child protection, acting as the main points of contact in all safeguarding concerns.
2. Where appropriate, convenes a Safeguarding Team to respond to a particular case.
3. Determines together with the Principal who will serve as the official representatives of the school in particular safeguarding cases.
4. Keeps the Principal updated on all safeguarding cases requiring external intervention.
5. Informs the Principal when the DSL or Safeguarding Team has recommended an official report to the Child and Youth Services or police. Once the Principal has been informed, communicate as necessary with the respective outside agency.
6. Ensures that written records of safeguarding referrals and all subsequent actions are kept, and stored securely (since school year 2023-2024, the iSAMS Wellbeing Manager and the agreed recording platform). Refrain from using electronic forms of communication to share specific details of safeguarding cases.

7. Annually reviews, revises, communicates, and monitors the effectiveness of all written safeguarding policy and procedure, in collaboration with the Leadership Team.
8. Leads on designing, delivering, and regularly reviewing safeguarding-related professional learning for employees.
9. Possesses appropriate training and experience in safeguarding procedure and local, national and international legal requirements. Minimum: *“Advanced Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads in International Schools (Level 3)”*. Maintains regular professional learning and training in safeguarding.
10. Ensures a child’s new school is informed of current or past safeguarding issues.
11. Honours the rights of the parents to be informed of matters that affect their child’s welfare, except in those cases where, after assessing the risk, informing the parent would be detrimental to the wellbeing of the child. Generally, takes the lead on communications with parents.

#### **1.4 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**

1. Deputises for, or is delegated to assist the DSL in any of their duties, including managing a specified case/s.
2. Possesses appropriate training and experience in safeguarding procedure and local, national and international legal requirements. Minimum: *“Advanced Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads in International Schools (Level 3)”* Maintain regular professional learning and training in safeguarding.

*N.B. At the time of writing (September 2024) the Principal serves as the DSL, and the Head of Early Years and Lower Primary serves as the DDSL. To ensure transparent and broad-based, effective decision-making, a Safeguarding Team (1.5) may be convened for particularly serious, difficult or sensitive cases.*

#### **1.5 Safeguarding Team**

1. A BCA Safeguarding Team will be convened as needed by the Principal, DSL or DDSL.
2. The BCA Safeguarding Team will take a multidisciplinary approach to a specific safeguarding or child protection incident. Each member will hold a specific role within the team to assure a thorough, balanced, and shared effort in all matters pertaining to safeguarding our students. The Senior Leadership Team is represented within the team. Experience has shown that a team approach is effective in sound and transparent decision-making in safeguarding situations..
3. Potential members of the BCA Safeguarding Team include:
  - Principal
  - DSL
  - DDSL
  - Head of Early Years and Lower Primary
  - Head of Upper Primary
  - Head of Secondary
  - Head of Diploma Programme
  - SENCO- School Psychologist
  - PSHE teacher

- The reporting employee
  - Relevant staff possessing a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) qualification
  - Others as needed (e.g specific Form Tutor or Class Teacher)
4. Team members will preserve objectivity and maintain ethical duty by removing themselves from participation in a case that the team member has or has had a social relationship with members of the child's family (dual relationship/conflict of interest), or if other reasonable concerns regarding the presence or potential of bias apply.

#### **1.6 Additional Responsibilities: Head of Early Years and Lower Primary, Head of Upper Primary, Head of Secondary and Head of Diploma Programme.**

1. Support and advise employees on their duties and responsibilities when safeguarding issues arise.
2. Support the Principal, DSL, DDSL and (when convened) the Safeguarding Team in the enactment of their duties as outlined in this Policy.
3. Actively monitor students of concern and establish contact with families of students when and as needed.
4. Actively monitor students' attendance and establish contact with families of students with excessive absences.

#### **1.7 Additional Responsibilities: Teachers of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)**

1. Deliver the PSHE-related safeguarding curriculum and/or support teachers in the implementation and delivery of the safeguarding curriculum, in collaboration with the Heads of Section.

#### **1.8 Additional Responsibilities: Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)/School Psychologist**

1. Maintain case notes on a regular basis of all students on their caseload. .
2. Inform the DSL/DDSL when safeguarding issues arise during the course of their work.
3. Advise the DSL/DDSL on matters related to child development and the age-appropriateness of possible interventions considered by the DSL/DDSL in response to a referral.
4. Assist the DSL/DDSL in establishing meaningful and effective relationships with local authorities and external agencies that are able to provide appropriate support and advice on matters related to child protection.
5. Keep up-to-date with training regarding Andorran law, policy and procedures for supporting and safeguarding children.

#### **1.9 All Employees**

1. Are fully informed of and understand the safeguarding procedures as outlined in this policy.
2. Are aware of and respond to the social and emotional needs of students in their care and are committed to safeguarding their wellbeing at all times.
3. Are informed of and understand the guidelines for handling student disclosure.
4. Are obliged to complete a confidential written referral (see Section 3, below) when issues of safeguarding arise or potential signs/symptoms of abuse or neglect are made evident.

5. Attend Safeguarding Team meetings when requested.
6. Deliver the established safeguarding curriculum where appropriate.
7. Attend all relevant training sessions provided by the school on safeguarding policies and procedures.
8. Refrain from making reports to parents or external agencies in safeguarding matters – instead they defer to the Safeguarding Leads and the Principal.
9. Adhere to Protective Practices (see Section 2, below)
10. Are subject to the safeguarding measures put in place through the school's recruitment practices and employment contracts.

#### **1.10 Externally Contracted Staff, Volunteers, Coaches, External Instructors, External After School Activity Facilitators**

1. Upon commencement of their association with the school, are fully informed of and understand the safeguarding procedures as outlined in this document.
2. Attend the first available training session provided by the school on safeguarding policy and procedures, and thereafter on a minimum of an annual basis.
3. Adhere to Protective Practices (Section 2)
4. Are subject to the safeguarding measures put in place through the school's background checks on all adults in this category.

#### **1.11 Visitors and Occasional Workers**

1. Are required to sign in at the reception upon arrival, and read and adhere to the safeguarding information on display at reception and/or printed on their visitor badge (Appendix 2).
2. Are informed of the school's commitment to safeguarding and child protection
3. Wear a visitor badge, keeping it visible at all times.
4. Adhere to Protective Practices (Section 2)

#### **1.12 Students**

It is the school's responsibility, at the beginning of each new school year, and as needed, to remind students of the following expectations:

1. Share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their peers.
2. Do not use physical or verbal violence. Examples of verbal violence include remarks that discriminate against, disrespect, or otherwise negatively affect others.
3. Seek the support of school employees if they experience or witness violence or abuse; either physical, verbal, or online.
4. Understand that any violence or abuse against fellow students may, upon review of the individual case, lead to expulsion from the school.

The Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum will include reinforcement of the above.



## 2. Protective Practices

The following is a summary of the practices that will help to safeguard both students and the adults responsible for their care:

1. Treat everyone with dignity and respect in line with the school's Mission and Values.
2. Treat all students equally – do not show favouritism or develop friendships.
3. Remember that you have been placed in a position of trust – do not abuse this.
4. Report all allegations, suspicions and concerns immediately (before the end of the school day).
5. Remember that someone may misinterpret your actions.
6. Respect students' right to personal privacy.
7. Act within appropriate boundaries even in difficult circumstances.
8. Encourage an open and transparent culture.
9. Create an environment where students feel safe to voice their concerns.
10. Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight or hearing of others.
11. Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust; for example a friendship, romance, or sexual relationship with a student who is over the age of consent.
12. Provide access to a safe space for students to talk about any concerns they may have.
13. Inform a colleague or leave the door ajar when working with or otherwise supporting individual students.
14. Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of coaching and counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
15. Report any situation where you may have unintentionally put yourself in a compromising position.
16. Follow the structures set in place within the BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as in related school policies.

## 3. Identification, Response, and Reporting

### 3.1 Identification of Safeguarding Concerns

#### How may mistreatment be revealed?

Signs and symptoms of abuse, harm, or neglect in general can vary greatly; some abused children do not display any symptoms as listed below, and behaviour that is out of character is not in itself an indication of mistreatment. Nonetheless, mistreatment may be indicated through:

#### 1. Observations of signs and symptoms, such as:

- unusual behaviour
- unexplained injuries (see also Appendix 4, for guidance on self-harm)
- emotional withdrawal – showing lack of trust in adults and/or peers
- eating problems
- delayed development
- timidity / nervousness
- mood swings or aggression
- deterioration in academic performance or under-achievement
- tiredness
- continuous lack of physical hygiene
- delay or refusal to seek healthcare/mental health services
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted

- chronic physical ailments with no reasonable source

**2. Allegations or reports of mistreatment made by another person; perhaps a concerned student, colleague, or parent.**

**3. Disclosure made by the student.**

### 3.2 Responding to a disclosure

If a student discloses abuse or harm, limit the conversation to 1) asking open-ended, non-leading questions to facilitate disclosure; 2) determine the wellbeing of the student, and 3) provide support.

Questioning must be limited to critical information in order to:

- Understand the basic facts
- Determine the immediate safety of the child
- Determine if the child needs immediate psychological or medical attention

When talking with a student who discloses abuse, DO:

- Remain calm, supportive, and reassuring
- Make sure that the setting is appropriate
- Believe the child and validate their feelings
- Listen openly and allow the child to speak freely
- Be aware of your non-verbal messages and facial expressions
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame for the situation
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing by telling
- Let the child know what you need to do and why, explaining that information will only be shared with people who need to know
- Allow the child control where feasible: give them choice where possible
- Write up careful notes afterwards of what was said, using actual words wherever possible
- Inform the DSL, DDSL or Principal, using the iSAMS Wellbeing Manager (Appendix 1), and where possible additionally in person, *before the end of the same working day.*

When talking with a student who discloses abuse, DO NOT:

- Try to investigate or question the child, except to clarify what you have heard. Do not ask leading or unnecessary questions or try to gather details about what the child is disclosing
- Display shock, anger, or disapproval of the abuser or the situation
- Make assumptions
- Criticise, place blame on, or judge any persons or the situation
- Suggest that the child may be to blame in any way for what happened
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep information secret/confidential
- Delay emergency action to protect a child
- Express disbelief in what the child is saying
- Discuss with your colleagues or anyone else other than the DSL, DDSL, Head of Section or Principal.

If:

- the student does not want to go home, this must be considered an emergency. Contact the DSL, DDSL, a Head of Section or the Principal immediately.
- you believe the student will go home, back to class, or elsewhere, to continued abuse, contact the DSL, DDSL, a Head of Section or the Principal immediately.
- There is evidence of suicidal ideation, follow the protocol described in Appendix 4.
- The student has talked about, or there is evidence of, self-harm, follow the guidance described in Appendix 4.
- you feel distressed, seek support from a member of the Leadership Team, DSL or DDSL. Do not discuss the disclosure with other colleagues or openly around the school.

### **3.3 Reporting safeguarding concerns**

#### **3.3.1 Reporting concerns about students**

##### **Safeguarding concerns**

In the instance that child abuse, harm, neglect, or endangerment is observed, suspected, or disclosed, report concerns to the DSL/DDSL.

1. Report the concern as soon as reasonably practicable, and before the end of the same working day, best through raising a concern using the iSAMS Wellbeing Manager (Appendix 1). Record only facts; not opinions, rumour, or hearsay. Record only what you directly saw, heard, and/or said.
2. The flowchart in Appendix 3 summarises the reporting procedures.
3. There is a specific protocol and guidance to be followed in the case of social ideation or non-suicidal self injury. Refer to Appendix 4.
4. After reporting the incident, do not discuss it with other colleagues or openly around the school. If you feel distressed, seek support from the DSL/DDSL or Principal.

##### **Wellbeing concerns**

Concerns that a student is struggling with their mental health should be discussed with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor or Head of Section. Indicators may include lack of energy, focus, interest, or interpersonal connection; persistent ups or downs in mood; or anxious feelings or behaviours. Wellbeing concerns are not always safeguarding concerns, but they should still be logged by the reporting adult using the iSAMS Wellbeing Manager (Appendix 1)

#### **3.3.2 Concerns regarding adults in school**

It is BCA employee's professional obligation to take action if concerned about a colleague's adherence to the BCA Protective Practices (Section 2), and/or Confidentiality Protocol (Section 4). Likewise, any concern about an adult's suitability to work with students, no matter how small, and even if no more than a "nagging doubt," should be reported. Potential actions include:

- Have an open conversation with the colleague regarding your concern. Encourage the colleague to tell their supervisor and to ask the supervisor to let you know that the conversation took place, so that the reporting loop is closed.
- If unsure how to respond, or which action to take, seek the advice of a trusted colleague.

- Report the concern directly to the Principal.
- If the concern is regarding the Principal, report the concern to the Board Chair. .

### 3.4 Follow up response

Once a concern has been identified and recorded, the DSL/DDSL will determine the appropriate response by the school, and whether it is appropriate for it to be addressed internally or by an external referral to an outside agency.

The DSL/DDSL will seek guidance as needed from the Principal and a Safeguarding Team may be convened to respond to a specific concern or incident.

The response (see also Appendix 3) will take into account:

- The nature of the concern or incident, including its location (home/school) and timing, and any adults or children involved.
- The level, likelihood and immediacy of risk to the child.
- The organisational capacity of the school to deal effectively with and resolve the concern or incident.
- The legal obligations upon the school.

#### 3.4.1 Police and Department of Social Affairs Protocols.

The DSL/DDSL will inform the Principal of the need to activate either of the following protocols that have been established in Andorra:

1. If the school is aware or has evidence that a child may be the victim of a situation of **sexual abuse or physical abuse**, they will activate the Immediate Action Protocol (**PAI Protocol**) by calling the Police Force directly, on telephone 110 or 872 000, which is the appointed agency who have the competence to act in these situations.
2. Regarding **situations of risk or helplessness**, it is the Department of Social Affairs (SEAIA) who intervene according to the degree of risk that is detected.

If the school detects a situation of risk or helplessness, the school will activate the Notification and Social Action Protocol for situations of risk for children (**PAS Protocol**) by filling in the corresponding form: <https://aplicacions.govern.ad/DenunciaTelematica/FormulariRiscMenorProfessional> to initiate professional intervention with the child and their family.

### 4. Confidentiality and Professional Duty of Care

Approaches to providing students with the best possible support require a well-rounded picture, which can only occur when the adults with shared responsibility for the welfare of a child can build an overview of the child's unique situations and needs. As such, it is critical that confidentiality guidelines are followed, because considerations around extenuating circumstances, privacy, legality, ethics, and duty of care can arise.

No individual employee should be in a position of being the sole bearer of sensitive student information, and may not promise confidentiality to a student in any situation.

If a student:

- discloses sensitive, personal information about themselves
- expresses concern for their wellbeing or the wellbeing of others, or
- indicates potential harm to self or others in any form,

The school employee should clearly explain to the student that their responsibility is to share this information with the appropriate person in order to protect and best support the student. Above all, the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the student must be supported and harm minimised. Explain to the student the rationale for sharing this information, creating a safe space to continue the conversation together with other appropriate adults and letting the student know that the situation will be handled with discretion and above all with the student's needs at the fore. Information should then be shared via the secure iSAMS Wellbeing Manager (3.3.1, above)

## **5. Related School Policy and Procedures that Safeguards Students**

### **5.1 Attendance**

Absence from school, or lateness, may be a consideration in identifying child protection concerns. Similarly, partial unexplained absence during the school day will be a cause for concern.

The school will have policies and procedures for the monitoring of absence, and prompt follow up.

The BCA complies with Andorran law regarding attendance, as set out in:

*“Decret del 20-03-2019 pel qual es regula la prevenció i tractament de l’absentisme escolar als centres educatius del Principat d’Andorra”\**

\*An update to the procedures surrounding attendance/absence reporting and follow up is expected from the Andorra Ministry of Education during the school year 2024-2025.

### **5.2 Admissions**

At the time of admission, the following documentation is secured:

- Legal documents that refer to parental custody
- Safeguarding declaration completed by the previous school\*
- Parental agreement per signature of the BCA Home-School Partnership\* (including the legal rights of children to a safe upbringing).

\*In development, school year 2024-2025.

### **5.3 Safeguarding Considerations on Overnight Field Trips, Sports Tournaments, Expeditions, International Award and CAS activities, and Homestays**

Students may be more vulnerable in off-campus situations for a variety of reasons. Because rules and routines can differ, interactions with new adults occur, and relationships and expectations can be easily blurred, safeguarding is therefore a key consideration within the BCA Field Trip Policy.

Potential safeguarding risks must be considered when preparing the BCA Risk Assessment for the activity, and in the ongoing dynamic risk assessment during the activity.

Off-campus service learning and other activities including sport as part of the Duke of Edinburgh International Award Scheme or the IB Creativity Activity Service (CAS) programme must also be assessed for safeguarding risks prior to approval, even if these are being carried out largely independently by students and outside of school hours.

### **5.4 Student Education and Behaviour**

Subject teachers and Heads of Section develop the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum as a taught subject and through other curricular areas (e.g Physical Education, Science).

Curricular themes within PSHE, including within the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) component, will include:

- Using safety language
- Safe and unsafe touch
- Ways to keep ourselves safe
- Advocating for others and self
- Digital citizenship / online safety

The BCA Behaviour Policy outlines expectations for interactions between students.

#### **5.4.1 Peer-on-peer abuse**

The BCA Behaviour Policy provides the following guidance, sourced from *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, Department for Education, 2024:

- All incidents are judged on a case by case basis as there may be contextual information about both victim and alleged perpetrator
- The victim needs to be supported and protected, and while an allegation is reported and investigated there may need to be separation or isolation of students depending on the nature of the incident.
- Recognising that the perpetrator may themselves be the victim of abuse, an assessment should be made to see if this is the case.
- A risk assessment needs to be carried out to determine follow up actions (for example, are the victim and perpetrator sharing the same classroom or not; what would be the effect of short term suspension, permanent exclusion).

- Responses should be multi-agency and involve parents where appropriate depending on the nature of the allegations. This may include notification of police in the case of a criminal offence.

## 5.5 Online Safety and Remote Learning

Students may be vulnerable when online, and in a remote learning environment, for a variety of reasons. Online safety forms an integral part of Student Education (see 5.4), and is embedded within the BCA Educational Technology Policy.

The BCA Anti-Bullying Policy addresses cyberbullying.

## 5.6 Employee Education and Training

The Leadership Team, in collaboration with the DSL/DDSL, leads on developing and facilitating all safeguarding and child protection-related professional learning for employees. Colleagues who are hired mid-year complete a relevant training package to cover missed content.

5.6.1 Annual training for all BCA employees This must include:

- Reporting procedures and policies at the BCA
- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- How to handle student disclosures
- Confidentiality requirements
- Protective practices
- Healthy Relationships (PSHE) curricular overview and understanding/use of common language
- Cultural issues relevant to child protection
- Suicidal ideation and Non-Suicidal Self Injury (NSSI) response
- *modus operandi* of child sex offenders and Lessons from Serious Case Reviews

Modules provided by Tes Global Ltd. are typically used as the basis for annual BCA staff professional development in safeguarding and child protection, supplemented by face to face instruction and discussion of scenarios, and led by the DSL/DDSL.

5.6.2 Training for externally contracted staff, volunteers, coaches, external instructors, external after school activity facilitators

- Reporting procedures and policies at the BCA
- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- How to handle student disclosures
- Confidentiality requirements
- Protective practices

## 5.6 Safer Recruiting Practices

The BCA is committed to safer recruitment practices, and values these as critical to keeping students safe.

For international hires, BCA advertises through a reputable platform (Tes.com), seeks at least two professional references, and then works with the Immigration Department of the Govern d'Andorra, and via

the agency 'ANCEI- Consultoría Estratégica Internacional' to finalise the background checks and hire of the candidate. For local hires, BCA follows the regulations for all schools in Andorra, and also seeks professional references. As good practice, all potential hires are interviewed by at least two members of the BCA leadership or administration team.

All employees must periodically submit an updated police check, as per the Andorran legislation for schools.

Note also Section 3.3.2, above.

## **5.7 Parent Education and Communication**

Regular parental communication and workshop opportunities take place in areas including:

- The school's legal duty to safeguard our students, and accompanying information on policy and practice
- How and where to share safeguarding concerns, as well as on how the school responds to concerns and allegations when raised
- Digital citizenship, online safety, and how parents can support their children in these areas
- Positive behavioural support at school and at home.
- Common language and practices used across the school as concerns the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum (e.g. safety language, consent, body ownership, and advocacy); resources for supporting related conversations at home.

## **5.8 Professional Networks**

The School Leadership establish and maintain professional networks with:

- Servei Especialitzat d'Atenció a la Infància i l'Adolescència (SEAIA)
- Ministeri d'Educació i Ensenyament Superior, Andorra
- Local doctors, psychologists, and other medical professionals
- Policia d'Andorra

## **6. Definitions**

Some of the below terms appear within the Policy, others provide definitions and background to the terms used in employee training.

### **Abuse with help of media**

The breach of personal rights of students through the use of digital or other media.

### **Child**

Every human being below the age of 18 years. For simplicity, in this policy the term 'child' covers 'adolescent' as well.

### **Child Protection**

Activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or may potentially suffer from abuse, harm, or neglect.



**Safeguarding**

Measures to protect the health and wellbeing of children to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect.

**Danger to others**

Any present, recent, or imminent situation where a child is thinking about or engaging in actions which can cause substantial harm to others (for example, sharing/offering drugs, violent actions, or promoting violence in others).

**Danger to self**

Any present, recent, or imminent situation where a child is thinking about or engaging in actions which can cause them serious harm (for example, substance abuse, suicide, self-harm, actions which risk criminal prosecution).

**Emotional abuse**

A pattern of verbal aggression, insults, threats, put-downs, lies, denial of affection, or age-inappropriate expectations that cause emotional distress, lack of a sense of safety, lack of a sense of self-worth, chronic fright, cognitive impairment, or induce social isolation.

**Neglect**

Failure of a caretaker to provide for a child's basic needs; neglect can be physical, medical, educational, and/or emotional.

**Peer-on-peer abuse**

Any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations.

**Physical abuse**

Intentional infliction of physical injury to a child, or failing to take reasonable steps to prevent physical injury. Adults who inflict physical abuse as a form of discipline or as consequences of misbehaviour are in violation of Andorran law.

**Psychological abuse**

See Emotional abuse.

**Sexual abuse**

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. 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. In addition to the criminal acts defined by Andorran criminal law, this Policy applies when a school employee makes or attempts to initiate contact of a sexual nature with a student regardless of whether that student is of full legal age or not and to sexual contact between students when one of those involved does not understand, cannot give consent to, and/or which causes emotional and/or physical harm.

## **Appendix 1: How to Raise a Concern Within iSAMS**

The iSAMS Wellbeing Manager is the confidential online reporting and recording tool. It should be used to report and record all safeguarding and child protection concerns, and subsequent actions, and is additionally used to report and record general wellbeing concerns over a student.

1. Log in to iSAMS and access the Wellbeing Manager module. Click on 'Create a Concern'.
2. You will see a pop up which you will need to complete with as much information as possible. You can also add additional students if more than one student is involved. Click 'Next' once all the information is entered.
3. Once the information is complete you will see the below confirmation box, just click on 'Finish' to close this box. Now the DSL & DDSL have been notified by email and will contact you to discuss further. Please follow up with a conversation with or email to the DSL/DDSL

Please note:

This information is private and confidential, only the DDSL & DDSL and any staff subsequently assigned to the concern by them have access to this data.

## Visitor Code of Conduct

### Please read the following information carefully

The British College of Andorra is committed to building and maintaining an environment that proactively safeguards our students, promoting their personal growth, wellbeing, and care.

#### Visitors (including BCA parents)

1. Are required to sign in at the reception upon arrival
2. Must wear a visitor badge, keeping it visible at all times.
3. Must read and adhere to the safeguarding information printed on their visitor badge.
4. Must adhere to Protective Practices (see over).

Exceptions to points 1 and 2 may be made at formal “open doors” school events to which many parents are formally invited, for example parent-teacher conferences, and class and school open events and performances.

#### Safeguarding information printed on the visitor badge.

*The British College of Andorra is committed to building and maintaining an environment that proactively safeguards our students, promoting their personal growth, wellbeing, and care.*

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect in line with the school’s Mission and Values.
- Respect students’ right to personal privacy.
- Plan activities with children that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight or hearing of others
- Do not have unnecessary physical contact with children.
- Do not take photographs or videos of children unless permission is obtained.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### Protective Practices

The following is a summary of the practices that will help to safeguard both students and the adults responsible for their care:

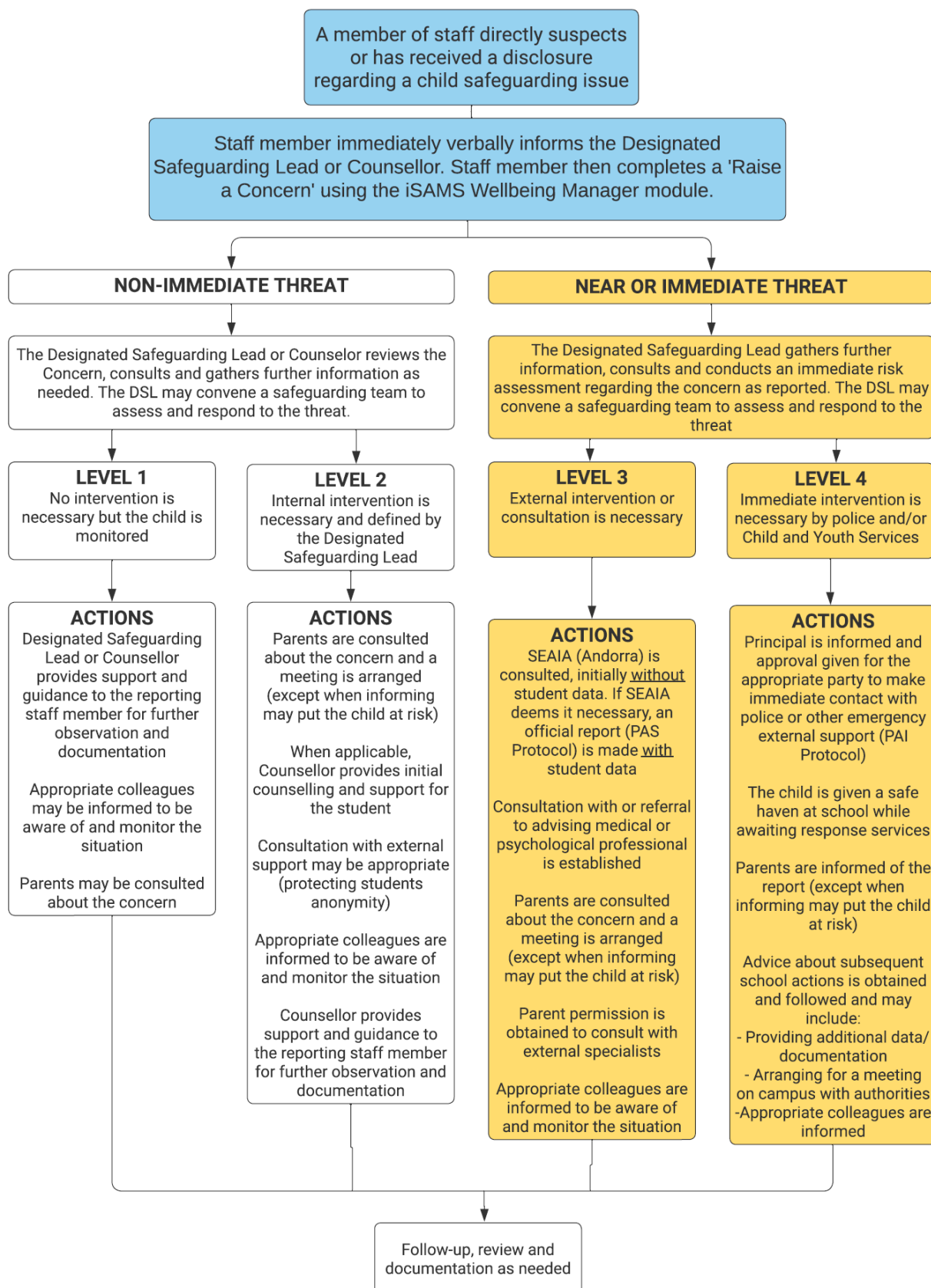
1. Treat everyone with dignity and respect in line with the school’s Mission and Values.
2. Treat all students equally – do not show favouritism or develop friendships.
3. Remember that you have been placed in a position of trust – do not abuse this.
4. Report all allegations, suspicions and concerns immediately (before the end of the school day).
  - Remember that someone may misinterpret your actions.
  - Respect students’ right to personal privacy.
  - Act within appropriate boundaries even in difficult circumstances.
  - Encourage an open and transparent culture.
  - Create an environment where students feel safe to voice their concerns.
  - Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight or

hearing of others.

- Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust; for example a friendship, romance, or sexual relationship with a student who is over the age of consent.
- Provide access to a safe space, such as the school counselling office, for students to talk about any concerns they may have.
- Inform a colleague or leave the door ajar when working with or otherwise supporting individual students.
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of coaching and counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Report any situation where you may have unintentionally put yourself in a compromising position.
- Follow the structures set in place within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as in related school policies.

## Appendix 3 Flowchart for Safeguarding Reporting and Response Procedure at BCA

### BCA Safeguarding Reporting and Response Flowchart



*N.B. The Counsellor position in the above flowchart is currently (School Year 2024-2025) replaced by one of the DDSL, the school SENCO-Psychologist, or one of the current 3 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) qualified staff at BCA.*

## **Appendix 4 BCA Employee Protocol: Suicidal Ideation and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury Response**

In the event that a BCA employee has a concern regarding a student's potential danger to self, this protocol should be followed.

### **Definition of suicidal ideation** ([source: WHO](#))

Thoughts, ideas, or ruminations about the possibility of ending one's life, ranging from thinking that one would be better off dead to formulation of elaborate plans.

### **Confidentiality**

No individual staff member should be in a position of being the sole bearer of sensitive student information and may not promise confidentiality to a student in any situation. All staff are required to uphold professional duty-of-care as defined in Section 4 of the BCA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **Staff self-care**

Supporting a student who has indicated suicidal ideation or self-harm can take a toll; it is important for the staff member involved to be aware of their own mental health and to acknowledge and address any distress they may feel. In any case, it is recommended that staff members involved in supporting a student debrief with the DSL, DDSL or School Psychologist, and access self-care strategies to address stress they may feel.

### **Suicidal ideation / suicide prevention response protocol for staff**

When a staff member identifies a student with suicidal ideation (e.g. making suicidal statements/comments, writing suicide notes), the staff member should:

- Remain calm and supportive and try to contain the situation. (i.e., do not draw attention to the student and try not to show signs of shock)
- Do not leave the student alone.
- Immediately notify the DSL, DDSL or member of the Leadership Team by whatever means are available.
- Escort the student directly to the treatment-privacy room next to the school reception.

### **If it is not possible to escort the student to the treatment-privacy room, the staff member must:**

- Stay with the student until the DSL, DDSL, or member of the Leadership Team arrives

**This person will contact the parent(s) to inform them of the disclosure and that they need to come to the school to pick up their child.**

### **Sample script for school staff:**

Ex: *"Mrs./Mr. A, I need to talk with you about a serious matter. Are you in a place where you can talk privately? Today your child told a teacher/other staff that he/she has been thinking about/planning to do something to harm themselves/others. (Repeat the child's statement.) Your child is safe now, and is being monitored by their teacher/other, but it is important that you come to the school as soon as possible today to talk with us about what they said, and to discuss what needs to be done to help them. The BCA procedure in situations like this is that a parent or family member must pick the student up from school and take them home or to another place where the family can make sure that the child is safe. The relevant staff here will be discussing the situation and making a plan to ensure that their safety and wellbeing can be maintained at school."*

**The student should not be left alone at any point.**

**If a student is in immediate danger, call 116 to summon an ambulance.**

**The student must leave the school with a parent/guardian/family member/emergency contact or in the care of a medical professional. (STUDENT MUST NOT LEAVE SCHOOL WITHOUT A RESPONSIBLE ADULT).**

The DSL/DDSL, in discussion with the Principal, and in alignment with the response flowchart in Appendix 3, will consider activating the PAS Protocol (See Section 3.4.1, above).

### **School trips**

On school trips, the trip leader calls the DSL, DDSL, Principal or any member of the Leadership Team, who decides on next steps, using this protocol as guidance.

**Self-harm note:** If a student discloses other harmful behaviour such as cutting, self-medicating, or an eating disorder (i.e. behaviour that is dangerous but not immediately life-threatening), the DSL/DDSL should be informed immediately. See **Self-harm information** further down in this document.

-----

### **Definition of self-harm** ([Source: Mayo Clinic](#))

Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI), often simply called self-injury, is the act of deliberately harming one's own body, such as cutting or burning oneself. It is typically not meant as a suicide attempt. Rather, this type of self-injury is a harmful way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger and frustration. While self-injury may bring a momentary sense of calm and a release of tension, it is usually followed by guilt and shame and the return of painful emotions. Although life-threatening injuries are usually not intended, with self-injury comes the possibility of more serious and even fatal self-aggressive actions.

### **Responding to and supporting the student**

First and foremost, if a student discloses self-harm, it is most important to take their concerns seriously no matter how petty or frivolous they may appear. Likewise, it is important not to close doors to disclosure; reassure the student that they are in a safe space here at school, building a space of trust so they are assured that talking about the self-harm is the right thing to do, and that they will be appropriately supported here.

### **During your conversation, be sure to let the student know:**

- You cannot promise confidentiality, as you are not a mental health professional, and will need to share this information with the DSL or other appropriate senior member of staff.
- The DSL/DDSL, in discussion with those other staff (e.g. form tutor or class teacher) who know the student best, will determine what steps do or do not need to be taken, keeping the student's wellbeing and safety foremost in mind, and will be able to maintain certain levels of confidentiality, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The DSL/DDSL (or member of staff delegated by them) offers a safe space to support the student with addressing self-harm. They will want to speak with the student, and you can join the conversation if the student prefers.

### **If at any point you observe a visible injury:**

- Accompany the student to see the qualified First Aid staff at Reception. The First Aider's care and documentation takes precedence over the conversation with others..

### **How common is self-harm?**

Statistics vary around the world; one recent American study cites that around 17% of adolescents have engaged in self-harm at least once, and a UK study cites around 13% or more.

### **Identifying self-harm**

Signs and symptoms are sometimes absent or easy to miss. It is not uncommon for individuals who self-harm to offer stories which seem implausible or which may explain one, but not all, physical signs. If a student says they are not self-harming or evades the question, you can keep the door open by reminding them that you are always available to talk about anything, should they so wish. Try to stay connected to the student and look for other opportunities to ask, particularly if there are continuing signs that your suspicion is correct.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the behaviours that some people might consider to be self-harm:

- Scratching or picking skin
- Cutting body
- Tying something around body
- Inserting objects into body
- Scouring/scrubbing body excessively
- Hitting, punching self
- Pulling out hair
- Over/under eating
- Excessive drinking of alcohol
- Taking non-prescription drugs
- Burning or scalding body
- Hitting walls with head
- Taking an overdose of medication or swallowing something dangerous
- Self-strangulation
- Risky behaviours such as running into the road, not practising safe sex

As most self-harm is privately or secretly carried out it can be hard to notice that a young person is self-harming but some signs to look out for are:

- Changes in clothing to cover parts of the body, e.g. wearing long sleeved tops
- Reluctance to participate in previously enjoyed physical activities, particularly those that involve wearing shorts or swimsuits, for example
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Changes in consumption of drugs/alcohol
- Changes in levels of activity or mood
- Increasing isolation from friends/family

### **Is it just attention-seeking?**

There are many factors which lead people to self-harm, including a desire to escape, to reduce tension, to express hostility, to make someone feel guilty, or to increase caring from others. Even if the young person does not intend to commit suicide, self-harming behavior may express a strong sense of despair and needs to be taken seriously. It is not just attention-seeking behaviour.

### **Why do young people harm themselves?**

All sorts of upsetting events can trigger self-harm. Examples include: arguments with family members, break up of a relationship, poor academic results, or interpersonal difficulties at school. Sometimes several stresses occur over a short period of time and one more incident can be the final straw. Young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties or low self-esteem can be particularly at risk from self-harm. Suffering a bereavement or serious rejection can also increase the risk. For some people self-harm is a desperate attempt to show others that something is wrong in their lives.



### **Social contagion and self-harm**

Social contagion refers to the way in which behaviour like self-harm can spread among members of a group. The risk for contagion is increased when high-status or “popular” students are self-harming or when self-harm is used as a means for students to feel a sense of belonging to a particular group.

To prevent social contagion, staff must reduce communication around self-harm. If a student is self-harming, he or she should be advised not to explicitly talk with other students about engaging in self-harm or showing wounds to others. To prevent social contagion, students must not be given explicit details about self-harm. Whenever the opportunity arises, staff can speak with students about signs of distress in themselves and others, as well as teaching the use of positive coping skills.

### **Sources**

The following resources were referenced in the completion of this protocol. Permission has been obtained for cases where resources have been duplicated:

Franconian International School, Germany- Suicide Prevention Protocol

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20350950>

[Model Guidance: Schools Responding to Incidents of Self-Harm, Wiltshire Children & Young People’s Trust.](http://www.wiltshirepathways.org.uk/)  
<http://www.wiltshirepathways.org.uk/>