



KEEPING US SAFE – CHILD PROTECTION FOR BSB SANLITUN

The British School of Beijing, Sanlitun (BSB Sanlitun), in keeping with its core values and has adopted a Child Protection Policy to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school.

The BSB Sanlitun Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of which China is a signatory. The two key articles we wish to draw your attention to are:

Article 19 - Protection from abuse and neglect

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 34 - Sexual exploitation

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Parents, families, and all staff agree to work in partnership and abide by the policies adopted by school. All of us shall work in partnership to ensure the safeguarding and child protection of all people within our school.

How is abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviours, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviours.

Abuse is:

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death;
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning;
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering;
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy;



- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child;
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision—this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time. Should parents/ guardian leave the country for any reason then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian.
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment);
- Emotional (e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc).

Sexual abuse is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host country or school policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention.

While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as Grooming, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behaviour of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved. Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

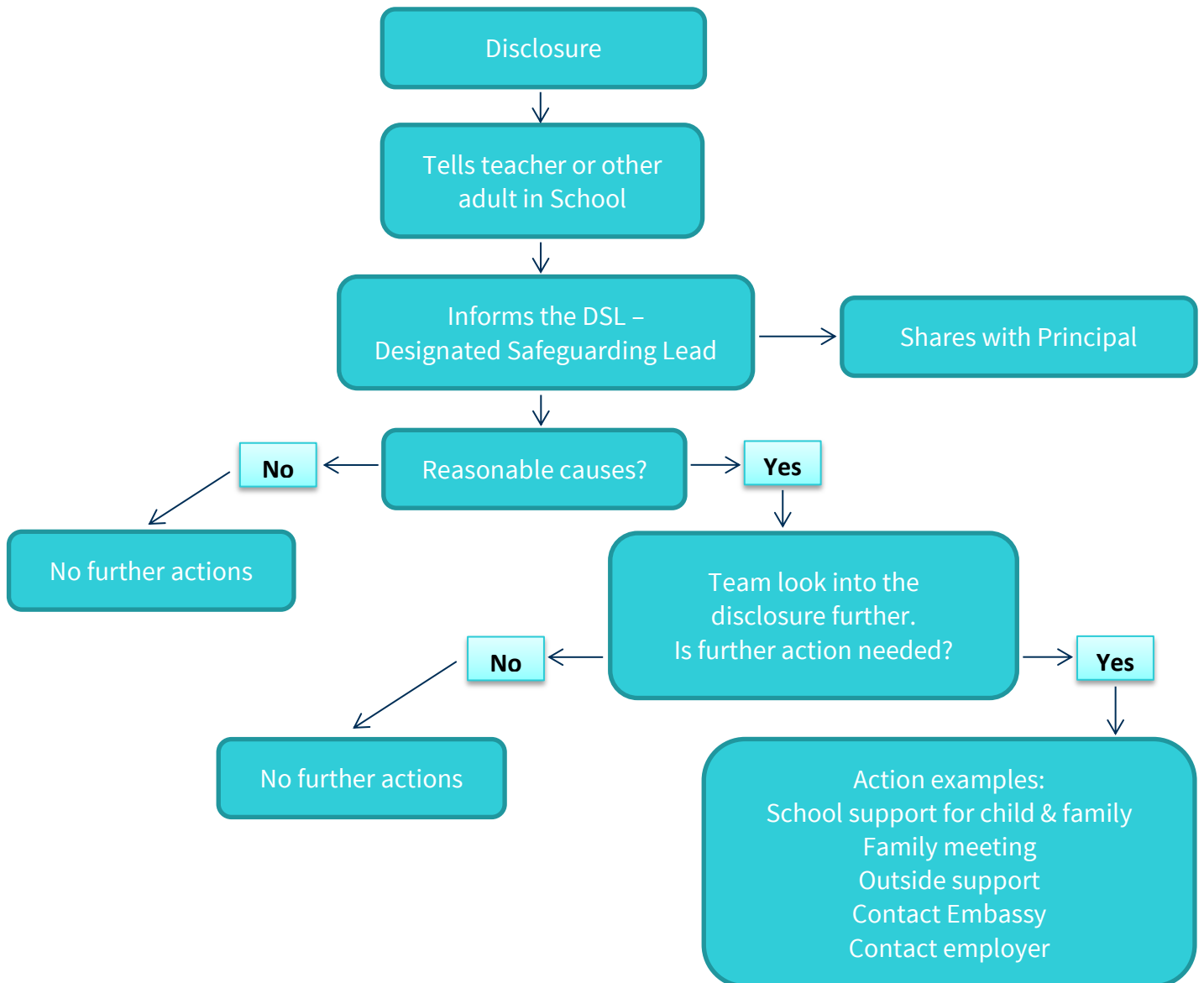
What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leader). In all cases, the Principal will be notified by the DSL.

All staff and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All BSB Sanlitun employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect.



Steps followed after disclosure



Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect

Step 1

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from DSL within 48 hours. The DSL will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report.

The response team will include the DSL, Principal, Teacher, and other individuals as the principal sees fit. In all cases, follow up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.



The following procedure will be used:

- 1). Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case.
- 2). Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
- 3). Report status of case to Principal.
- 4). Determine the course of follow-up actions.

Step 2

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that **may** take place are:

- Discussions between the child and a designated counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or Deputy Head.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school or another attorney.
- Informal consultation with local authorities.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by a designated teacher, Head of Learning Support or a designated councilor, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse and incest.

In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office.



Step 3:

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The designated counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. BSB Sanlitun will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of BSB Sanlitun, the Principal will follow company policy pursuant to ethical professional behaviour.

The BSB Sanlitun Child Protection Policy considers its international context and how this plays a part in how we conduct our responsibilities.

THE COMMUNITY –

At-risk characteristics include limited laws on child protection, limited resources to expat families, unusually high work stress placed on parents, acceptance of inappropriate behaviour towards children (excessive corporal punishment), unusually high expectations placed on children to achieve.

BSB Sanlitun –

Strictly implements the Child Protection Policy, trains teachers to recognise abuse, supports parents in protective behaviours, networks with community and health services for holistic referrals, networks with local authorities.

THE FAMILY –

At-risk characteristics include parents under stress, families with perceived less support and access to resources, socially isolated, unusually high expectations placed on their children, parental history of inappropriate discipline as children.

BSB Sanlitun –

Works with parents to understand appropriate discipline, networks with community and health services, teaches parents child protection practices.

THE CHILD –

At-risk children include those with difficult temperament, defiance, health issues, social or academic difficulties, and those unaware of their rights to protection.

BSB Sanlitun –

Promotes respect, study and social skills, teaches rights to protection, healthy relationships, assertiveness, using support systems.