



SIS POLICY MANUAL

431-1: SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES

POLICY LINK(S)	LAST REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW
431 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 405 Admissions Policy 412 Inclusion Policy 450 Personal Data Protection WWW Trip Handbook	May 2023	May 2025

Roles & Responsibilities

Strategic Head of Child Protection (Head of School)

The role of the Strategic Head of Child Protection is to oversee the operational leadership of child protection at the school.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL oversees the child protection practices at each school division. The DSL is the divisional principal.

School Administrators (Principals & Assistant Principals)

The role of School Administrators is to provide appropriate discipline to students and enforce school policies among all stakeholders.

If the concern involves an SIS staff or faculty member, the divisional principal will follow board policy according to ethical professional behaviour.

School Counsellor

The school Counsellor works alongside the DSL and Safeguarding Team in gathering data to help support the child. Their job is to follow up on referrals, disclosures, and concerns. School Counsellors act under the supervision of the DSL and collaborate with other support providers inside and outside of school.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team designated by the DSL is the divisional counsellor and principal. Their responsibilities include making sure all safeguarding issues are handled appropriately.

School Staff

- Any adult employed by SIS. School staff are responsible for reporting any concerns. According to SIS policy, all school staff are mandatory reporters for our school to abide by Chinese law.
- Child Protection Definition: The commitment and actions to protect children from harm.
- Please see Appendix 1 for comprehensive definitions of various concerns related to child protection and safeguarding.

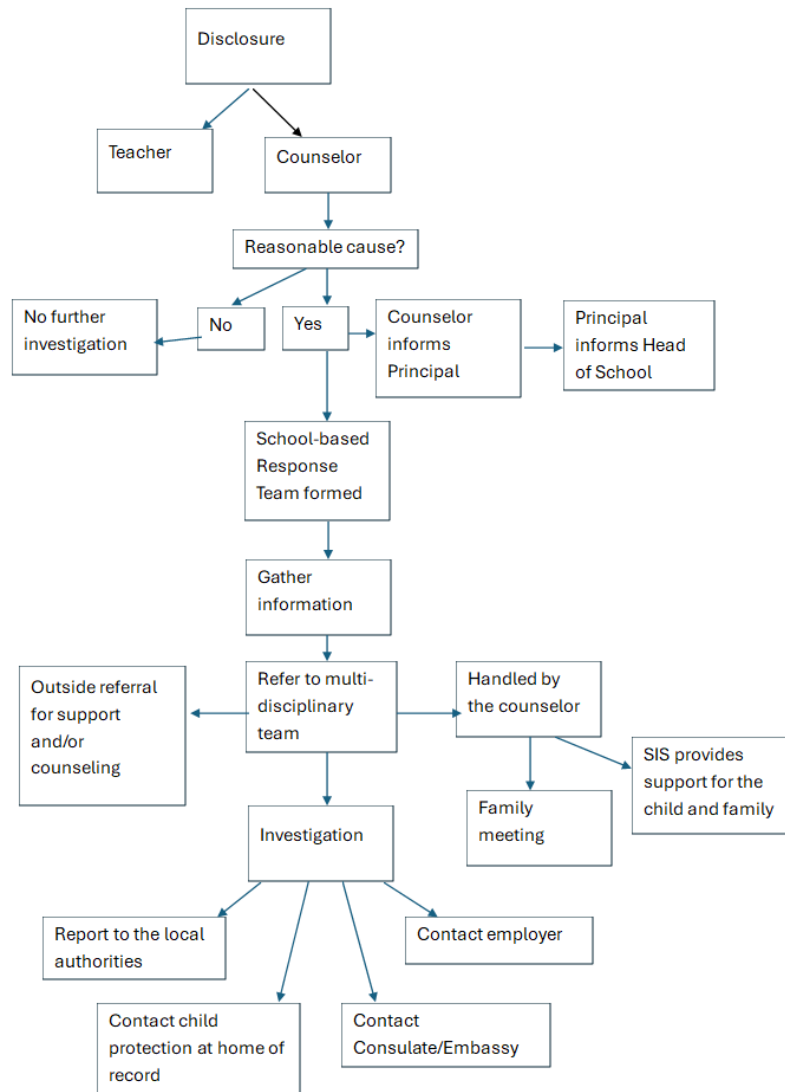
How Staff Report Safeguarding Concerns

- All suspected cases of harm **must** be reported immediately to the divisional Counsellor. The divisional counsellor will share with the principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Specific information about child protection concerns, including images of students, should not be transmitted via WeChat or TEAMS.
- This must be followed up by completion of the Child Protection Reporting Form (see Appendix 2 for information that will be required to complete the form)
- The Child Protection Reporting Form is available on the SIS StaffSite and in the signature line of all counsellor emails.
- The School Counselor or Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow up with the concern and act where necessary.
- All child protection concerns are confidential.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified of child protection concerns in all cases. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for informing the Strategic

Head of Child Protection (Head of School) of circumstances where there is reasonable cause to believe child abuse or neglect may be present.

SIS Child Protection Steps:



Documentation & Confidentiality



- The school holds records of child protection concerns in a secure system. Designated Safeguarding Leads and school counsellors can access this system as needed.
- The DSL will review child protection records, and pertinent information will be passed on to new divisions or schools as appropriate.
- School staff expects all child protection matters to be kept confidential.

Guidelines for Responding to a Child's Disclosure

- Do not let a child swear you to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report what they tell you, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral setting where you can have quiet and few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting them explain in their own words. Don't pressure for a significant amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story the child tells you is challenging to hear, it is important not to register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the abuser - it is often someone the child loves or with whom they are close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront people involved with the concern.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency—report immediately by contacting the student's divisional Counsellor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not take the child home with you!
- Respect the child's situation by keeping disclosures confidential from other staff members and students.
- Let the child know that someone else must also talk with them and explain why. School staff can tell students that this will usually be the divisional Counsellor.

Please Note:

Teachers are not investigators. The teacher must immediately receive disclosures and refer them to the divisional Counsellor or DSL.



Most child protection concerns will be handled by school counsellors, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Serious mental health issues where there is a risk of harm

Cases Referred to Community Supports

- 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 may be made to:

- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record child protection agency
- Local law enforcement agencies

A Systemic View of the SIS Child Protection Policy

The SIS child protection policy supports the child, the family, and the community. Research indicates that children are as prone to child abuse in international communities as they are in communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves the dynamics of the child, the family, and the community.

THE CHILD	SIS – teaches students to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Students are taught explicit social-emotional skills, staying safe from harm, and recognizing their support networks. SIS offers a robust guidance program to students.
THE FAMILY	SIS - works with family members and guardians to support them in their parenting role by helping them understand appropriate discipline, healthy parenting practices, and ways to manage child development.

THE COMMUNITY	SIS - strictly implements the Child Protection Policy & Protocols, trains all staff to recognise and report harm and implements practices to keep students safe on campus.
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Staff Training, Employment Standards, and Prevention

Employment Standards & Safer Recruitment

To ensure that our children are safe and well cared for, all employees of Shekou International School who have contact with students go through a police clearance, a minimum of two reference checks, and, if applicable, an international background check before SIS employs them.

Staff Training

Faculty and staff receive annual training on how to appropriately interact and communicate with students, as well as how to recognise and report issues of abuse and neglect. Staff are required to sign and adhere to the SIS Code of Conduct, which guides ethical staff behaviour.

Student & Parent Education

Students at SIS are provided with age-appropriate guidance lessons to help them understand personal safety, digital safety, their rights, and whom to seek help from when they feel they are unsafe, uncomfortable, or such rights have been violated.

Bullying prevention and response to bullying are also part of our socio-emotional program, and we work with students in age-appropriate ways to help them act and respond positively to daily stressors.

Parents can consult with educators and mental health professionals and attend seminars throughout the school year. This education focuses on positive child development practices and strategies to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors in our students' lives.

Digital Privacy and Safety

In the interest of child safety and privacy, teachers are limited to using children's first names (or, in some cases, initials) when posting pictures or referencing students in social

media posts. Teachers or students must never provide student's physical locations in any postings. All photos and videos must be taken with geotagging (location services) removed. Digital student portfolios are only shared with family members. Teachers are only allowed to use school-approved devices to capture students' images, videos, and voice recordings.

All SIS employees should communicate with students only on school-approved e-platforms. Appropriate digital boundaries are expected between SIS employees and students. Staff personal social media accounts should not be accessible to students. All e-communication should have educational value and purpose. Any virtual meetings should be done in an observable and interruptible place.

SIS employees are not permitted to contact students through popular social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat etc.) unless the contact is limited to a specific part of a student's learning (i.e. a school project) or the student is a relative. Teachers are not permitted to contact students through social media or private communication accounts until the student has graduated from secondary school. The exception to this would be for alums-related matters.

Appendix 1 How is abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their 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 needs of the more powerful person, typically either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions based on understanding the impact of certain behaviours.

Physical Abuse

- 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 actions may include but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard for a child's pain 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.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colours)
- Injuries reflecting the shape of the article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained lacerations, abrasions, or fractures

Neglect

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

Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter or lack of appropriate supervision) would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship, such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period. Note: SIS requires one parent to be a full-time resident of Shenzhen. Should parents/guardians leave the country for any reason, then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardian Forms are available from SIS. These are expected to be completed before parents/guardians leave the country)
- Medical (e.g., failure to ensure adequate sleep or nutrition, failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment, etc.)



- 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 the presence of the child, invasion of privacy for no particular reason, violent threats, etc.)

Possible indicators of NEGLECT

- The child is unwashed or hungry
- Children that chronically sleep-deprived
- Parents are uninterested in their child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- The child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent from Shenzhen for any period of 24 hours or greater without appropriate provision made for the child's care, and a temporary guardian named
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of an emergency

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is committing or allowing a sexual offence to be committed 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 is not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with more insidious results. 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 it is more challenging to report.

Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that sex is a form of love, so they tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no adverse symptoms because of their perception of being loved.

Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counsellors.

Possible indicators of SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual knowledge, behaviour, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in a child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- The child running away from home and did not give any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting
- Child Exploitation
- Child exploitation is any exploitation which results in actual or potential harm to a child's health, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power (WHO, 2020). Exploitation may include acts of using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage.

Bullying

Bullying is damaging, repeated, and persistent actions which tend to intimidate, oppress, injure, distress, or discomfort another individual. Bullying is not tolerated to create a positive learning environment and will be dealt with according to SIS discipline procedures.

Other Risk Factors

Students have the potential to be exposed to a variety of risk factors that have not been mentioned above as they develop. The risk factors listed below are harmful to students or a potential indicator of harm and shall be addressed through SIS's Child Protection Policy. The list below is not exhaustive.

- Absenteeism
- Frequent Illness
- Substance Use
- Faith Abuse

- Radicalisation
- Digital Sexual Behavior
- Peer on Peer Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Cyberbullying
- Guardianship Concerns

Appendix 2 Additional Possible Child Protection Situations

Suicidal Ideation

A concern about a student having suicidal thoughts may come to the adults attention through observing a change in the student's behavior and mood, something they write or draw, a conversation, a report from a friend, etc. Other possible indicators are giving possessions away, decline in personal hygiene, writing good bye letters, saying "you would be better off without me", risky behaviour, talking about death a lot, drug or alcohol use, withdrawal.

What should you do if you are concerned about a student's having suicidal thoughts?

If you feel comfortable, you can approach the student to check-in. An appropriate way to ask about the students thoughts could be 'Sometimes when people have had your experiences and feelings, they have thoughts of suicide. Is this something that you're thinking about?'

In general, these are some reminders:

- Don't be afraid to talk about suicide.
- Don't minimize the person's feelings.
- LISTEN- DO NOT try to solve the problem.
- Take them seriously and show them that you care and are concerned about them.
- Respond immediately! Don't Wait!
- If the person is ready to act, do not leave them alone
- Involve other people.

What is the school's response to a safeguarding concern around suicidal ideation?

The school counselor will check-in with the student and use an interview (Columbia Screener?) to determine the severity, frequency and duration of the symptoms. The DSL will be informed.

Actions in case of Imminent risk.

- 1.The student's parents will be asked to come to school, the student will remain supervised by the counselor or an administrator at all times until parents arrive.
- 3.Parents will be required to access professional support for a risk assessment, before which the student won't be able to return to school.
- 4.Upon receiving the risk assessment, the counselor, the parents, and the student will meet to determine a support plan. The support plan will need to be approved by the DSL. The school counselor will request consent to collaborate with any outside of school professionals the family is working with.
- 5.Teachers will be informed of the plan on a need-to-know basis and will be made aware that the students' wellbeing is being monitored.

Actions in case of non-imminent risk.

- 1.The counselor will arrange a meeting with parents within 24 hours. A referral will be provided, encouraging the family to visit a mental health professional.
- 2.The school counselor will continue to monitor the student's wellbeing.
- 3.Teachers will be informed that the student's wellbeing is being monitored.

Self-harm (non-suicidal self-injury NSSI)

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. Reasons may differ and change over time:

- expressing, managing, or coping with emotional distress

- trying to feel in control
- self-punishment
- a response to intrusive thoughts
- trying to feel numb
- trying to feel (NOT to feel numb)

There is evidence of a clear link between suicide or suicidal thoughts and people who have previously self-harmed. However, not everyone who self-harms want to end their life. Some people describe their self-harm as a way of staying alive by responding to or coping with severe emotional distress. It's important to find the right support or treatment to help deal with the underlying cause in a less harmful way.

Possible Indicators of Self-Harm

Marks on the body – scars or fresh cuts often on arms or legs (or torso), burn marks, unexplained scratches or bruises.

What should a teacher do if they think a student is self-harming?

- Don't be afraid to talk about it.
- Don't minimize the person's feelings.
- LISTEN- DO NOT try to solve the problem.
- Take them seriously and show them that you care and are concerned about them.
- Involve other people.

What is the school's response when a concern about self-harm is reported?

The school counselor will check-in with the student and inform the DSL.

The school counselor will use questions/interview to assess frequency and severity of the behaviour, stressors, and other coping strategies, as well as the Columbia screener for suicidality, to inform next steps.

A parent meeting may be held and a referral to professional support will be provided. Teachers will be informed on a need-to-know basis.

Child on Child Abuse

Child on child abuse refers to the abuse by one child of another child, regardless of the age, of stage of development, or any age differential between them.

Child-on-child abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):

- Bullying – including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory (including misogyny/misandry).
- Hate incidents and hate crimes – which may also include an online element.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’) – which may also include an online element.
- Physical abuse – such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.
- Racism – occurs when a person is treated less favorably because of their skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, or cultural group. Racist behaviour can include verbal abuse, physical attacks, exclusion from activities or opportunities and microaggressions, which can be conscious and unconscious. It can occur in person or online.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals – this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.
- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) – is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive.
- Online sexual harassment – this may be stand-alone or part of a wider pattern of sexual violence and/or harassment. It may include: non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery), sharing of unwanted explicit content, revenge pornography, which is a criminal offence, sexualized online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media, sexual exploitation, coercion and threats, and coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online

What is the school’s response when a concern about child-on-child abuse is reported?

The severity and frequency of the child-on-child abuse will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken. Incidents of abuse should be reported to the divisional Vice Principal or Principal, who will document and investigate.

The incident will be assessed in conjunction with the counselors. Following the investigation and assessment of the incident, these are some possible steps:

- Parents of all parties should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- The victim and the perpetrator will be provided with support by the counselor.
- The incident could be reported to the authorities
- An attempt will be made to change the perpetrator's behavior.
- The perpetrator will be required to reflect on his/her actions.
- The victim will meet with counselor for support and coping strategies.
- Consequences will be decided on a case-by-case basis, as defined in the Primary Parent Handbook and Secondary Student Parent Handbook, *the school's Responsible Device Use Policy*
- After the incident(s) has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure that repeated abuse does not take place.

Appendix 3 Required information for completing a Safeguarding/Child Protection form

1. Reporter Name
2. Reported Position at SIS
3. The date reporter became aware of the concern
4. Name of Student(s)
5. Grade(s)/Class (i.e. 4A)
6. Date of concern/incident
7. Time of concern/incident
8. Location of concern/incident
9. What concerns do(es) the student(s) have in their life?
 - Attendance
 - Bereavement



- Bullying (physical)
- Bullying (cyber)
- Household Violence (Domestic Violence)
- Student Substance Use
- Family Member Substance Use
- Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour
- Mental Health
- Peer on Peer Abuse (child-on-child abuse)
- Guardianship
- Online Safety
- Sexting
- Sexual Violence and Harassment
- Physical Abuse/ Physical Discipline
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Other

10. Information about concern (who, what, where, when, why, how)

Information about Individuals that have caused this concern

11. Name(s)

12. Contact information (phone & email, not WeChat)

13. Any other information about the individuals listed above?

14. Do you need to fill out a body map? Yes/No

Please read the following text...

After the report has been submitted, please keep all information regarding the case confidential.

The Child Protection Officer, division counsellor, or designee will investigate thoroughly.

Please approach the division counsellor or Child Protection Officer with further questions or concerns.

15. Do you understand your responsibilities as a staff member reporting this concern?

Staff Responsibilities when Reporting Concerns

Keep all information confidential

If you have questions, ask your divisional Counsellor or the child protection officer for clarification

Be present for your student(s), but do not attempt to investigate or intervene further