



Bangalore International School
A Caring, Connected Community

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Our Mission

A Caring, Connected Community

Our Vision

We care...for ourselves, for each other, for our school, for our planet.

We are connected...in building the capacity of all BIS learners for deep conceptual thinking, competency in life-worthy skills, and the character for life's challenges guided by a personal moral compass.

We are a community...inclusive of all learning profiles, welcoming of multiple perspectives, engaged in a continuous conversation among all learning partners about how to sustain and improve quality of learning and life at BIS.

1. Scope

Under this policy a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

This Policy applies to:

- 1.1. Bangalore International School (henceforth 'BIS' or 'the school') staff, whether full time, part time or engaged on short-term contracts, e.g. consultants, researchers etc. and whether international or national (henceforth, referred to as 'staff');
- 1.2. BIS students;
- 1.3. BIS board members and parents (henceforth referred to as 'associates');
- 1.4. staff and representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship to BIS that involves any contact with children (referred to as "staff of partner agencies");
- 1.5. any person who visits BIS programmes or premises and makes contact with children and who, therefore, must be made aware that this policy applies to them; and
- 1.6. BIS and any successor entity and any international programming unit whether established as part of BIS or as a separate BIS entity.

2. Policy Aims

Bangalore International School (henceforth, 'BIS' or 'the school') is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for all its students regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background. BIS endeavours to inculcate a culture of vigilance and resolves to always act in the best interests of the students.

As part of the culture of the school, we are committed to:

- 2.1. living up to our mission of being a caring and connected community. With this in mind, school personnel will, at all times, maintain professional boundaries with the students;
- 2.2. providing a physical and emotional environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected; and have the confidence to speak openly with the assurance of being heard;
- 2.3. hosting and attending programs aimed at increasing student awareness of personal safety and decision making in unsafe situations;

- 2.4. raising awareness, through Wellness sessions among students on body safety rules and boundaries, as well as whom to approach if they have any concerns about keeping themselves safe
- 2.5. working with parents to ensure an understanding of the school's responsibility for the welfare of all the children;
- 2.6. ensuring all staff receive regular and current training and support on child safety and are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's policies and procedures;
- 2.7. observing children who have been identified as 'in need' or 'at risk' including the need for protection;
- 2.8. maintaining confidentiality of records pertaining to child safety;
- 2.9. making child safety 'everyone's responsibility'.

The school recognises that the above aims require raising awareness about child safety among students and school personnel.

3. Child Safety Principles

With these policy aims in mind, the following conventions and laws have been consulted and adopted to provide a framework for this policy:

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005](#)
- [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012](#)
- [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act – 2015](#)
- [Karnataka State Child Protection Policy - 2016](#)

In line with our stated mission and vision, Bangalore International School (henceforth 'BIS') believes that

- 3.1. all child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights
- 3.2. child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. This includes sexual exploitation, which refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

- 3.3. all children must be safeguarded through the promotion of their rights as set out in the Child Safety Conventions listed above.

4. Child Safety Team

The Child Safety Team (henceforth 'CST') at BIS will consist of:

- one teacher who teaches in EY or ES
- one teacher who teaches in MS or HS
- one personal counsellor
- one teacher who teaches Physical Education

External Specialists are also consulted from time to time, including a lawyer and a professor specialised in Child & Adolescent mental health.

4.1. Designation, roles and responsibilities

The members of the CST will be designated as Child Safety Ambassadors (henceforth 'CSA'). The roles and responsibilities of the CST are:

- 4.1.1. ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated annually to align the policy with national and international changes in child safety requirements;
- 4.1.2. ensuring the implementation of this policy;
- 4.1.3. conducting an annual audit of the implementation of this policy;
- 4.1.4. ensuring all documentation related to child safety is kept confidential;
- 4.1.5. ensuring that all employees receive mandatory annual training on child safety;
- 4.1.6. ensuring that all students attend mandatory annual workshops that equip them to stay safe in a variety of situations;
- 4.1.7. following the procedures for reporting, responding to, and investigating any allegation, as described later in this policy;
- 4.1.8. ensuring that all proceedings are fair and are conducted in a manner as to protect the child;
- 4.1.9. ensuring that the proceedings do not jeopardise the child's development or future opportunities in any way;
- 4.1.10. conducting an audit of HR processes to ensure that all recruitment has been done in compliance with this policy. This includes validating that all employees have read, understood, signed and adhere to the stipulations of this policy. This also includes validating that all employees have been subject to regular police verification and background checks;

- 4.1.11. conducting an audit of admissions processes to ensure that all students and parents have read and signed this policy;

5. Types of Abuse

Child abuse takes multiple forms, some of which are listed below:

5.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is causing internal or external physical injury, not by accidental means. Physical abuse could include but is not limited to:

- biting
- burning
- drowning
- extreme discipline that causes the child pain or mental suffering.
- hitting
- kicking
- poisoning
- pushing
- shaking
- suffocating
- throwing

5.2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour where a child is subjected to continuous and hurtful verbal abuse, which disregards a child's emotional well-being. Emotional abuse could include but is not limited to:

- excessive criticism
- inappropriate expectations
- insults
- negative comparisons
- put downs
- rejection
- swearing
- threats

- yelling

5.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act where an adult or person in a position of authority includes a child in a sexual activity. Sexual abuse could include but is not limited to:

- developmentally inappropriate conversations about sexual content
- forced viewing of sexual acts, genitals, or pornographic media
- penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts
- sexual intercourse, anal or oral sex
- touching of genitals or breasts
- the exploitation of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices
- undressing or exposing oneself

5.4. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a form of child abuse that happens online and could include multiple factors mentioned above. Some specific forms of cyber-bullying include:

- sending abusive or threatening messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – sending menacing or upsetting messages on social media
- creating hate sites or groups about a specific child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a person or cause strife using their name
- sexting (sending explicit texts)
- pressuring children to send sexual photographs or engage in sexual discourse

6. Signs of Abuse

Abuse manifests itself in a variety of ways. Some signs are more visible and apparent than others. School personnel are expected to be particularly aware of and vigilant about the general signs and symptoms of different kinds of abuse, which includes:

- changes in behaviour — such as aggression, anger, hostility or hyperactivity, withdrawal from friends or activities — or changes in academic performance;
- neglect- poor hygiene, lack of supervision;
- frequent absenteeism from school;
- sleep disturbance;
- 'tummy pains' that aren't caused by a medical condition;
- eating disorders, such as overeating or a loss of appetite;
- unexplained minor injuries on a regular basis;
- self-harm or attempts at suicide;
- withdrawal and depression;
- sexual behaviour or knowledge that's inappropriate for the child's age;
- bullying

7. Child Safety Policy

7.1. BIS Responsibilities

7.1.1. BIS fully recognizes its responsibilities for child safety. Our policy applies to all staff, board members, associates and staff of partner agencies working in or with the school. At BIS we commit to:

- 7.1.1.1. ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. This should include undertaking background checks for all staff.
- 7.1.1.2. raising awareness of child safety issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe. This should be included in the curriculum at important stages.
- 7.1.1.3. ensuring that all students know that some behaviour is unacceptable and that the students are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse of which they might be the victims.
- 7.1.1.4. developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- 7.1.1.5. supporting students who have been subject to abuse.
- 7.1.1.6. establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

7.2. Staff Training and Responsibilities

- 7.2.1. We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school personnel are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.
- 7.2.2. The school will therefore:
 - 7.2.2.1. ensure that the Child Safety Ambassadors are sent for refresher and/or additional training in Child Safety at least once every three years;
 - 7.2.2.2. ensure that all teachers receive appropriate Child Safety training so that students will be able to approach any teacher with whom they are most comfortable;
 - 7.2.2.3. ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried;
 - 7.2.2.4. include opportunities in the curriculum, as mentioned earlier in Sections 2.2 and 4.1.6, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

7.3. Child Safety Requirements

- 7.3.1. In accordance with the conventions set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act – 2015, and Karnataka State Child Protection Policy - 2016 we will
 - 7.3.1.1. ensure that there is a team (i.e. the Child Safety Team) of designated persons (i.e. the Child Safety Ambassadors), responsible for child safety;
 - 7.3.1.2. ensure every member of staff and the board knows to bring any causes for concern to the notice of the Child Safety Ambassador(s).
 - 7.3.1.3. develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff. These procedures are found in the section below on ‘Child Safety Procedures’.

8. Child Safety Procedures

The Child Safety Procedures describe the procedures that need to be followed in terms of Child Safety in the school. These procedures must be shared with all school stakeholders. The next section summarises this one in terms of a Child Safety Flowchart, which is kept simple for ease of understanding.

8.1. Preventive Measures

Preventive measures refer to the means of ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.

- 8.1.1. The school provides parents, school personnel and students with a common definition of child abuse (physical, neglect, sexual and emotional).
- 8.1.2. The school personnel and students are sensitised about the fact that students with special needs and disabilities are especially vulnerable and advised on how to promote their wellbeing.
- 8.1.3. The Staff Code of Conduct is shared with student personnel and is duly signed by them as part of the onboarding process.
- 8.1.4. The school has procedures to ensure the safe recruitment and selection of staff/associates/service providers which includes:
 - written application
 - statement of suitability
 - personal interview
 - reference checks
 - criminal history background
 - sex offenders' registry
- 8.1.5. Curriculum should include strategies to recognize inappropriate behaviours, respond assertively and to report incidents to school personnel and/or family members.

8.2. Disclosure

The BIS Child Safety Policy includes procedures for receiving disclosure of concerns about or instances of abuse. The school personnel receive training about these disclosure procedures. The procedures vary depending on the nature and severity of the concern about or instance of abuse and are left to the discretion of the Child Safety Team and the Head of School, who are

individually and collectively responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the child or children.

8.3. Reporting

The BIS Child Safety Policy includes procedures that school personnel are to follow for reporting concerns about or instances of abuse. School personnel receive training about these reporting procedures. The procedures vary depending on the nature and severity of the concern about or instance of abuse and are left to the discretion of the Child Safety Team and the Head of School, who are individually and collectively responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the child or children.

8.4. Responding

The BIS Child Safety Policy includes procedures that school personnel are to follow in responding to concerns about or instances of abuse. School personnel receive training about these responding procedures. The procedures vary depending on the nature and severity of the concern about or instance of abuse and are left to the discretion of the Child Safety Team and the Head of School, who are individually and collectively responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the child or children.

9. Child Safety Practices

In order that the standards of reporting and responding delineated in the 'Child Safety Procedures' document are met, BIS will also ensure that it:

- 9.1. is guided through the child safety process by the principle of "best interests of the child"
- 9.2. takes positive steps to ensure the safety of children who are the subject of any concerns
- 9.3. listens to and takes seriously the views and wishes of children
- 9.4. takes seriously any concerns raised
- 9.5. supports children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
- 9.6. acts appropriately and effectively in requesting and/or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- 9.7. works in partnership with parents/guardians and/or other professionals to ensure the safety of children.