

CREATING A SAFE COMMUNITY



Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy, Guidelines and Procedures

Engage, Learn, Reflect

Engage: EIS provides a safe educational environment where all students, staff and parents engage in a caring and diverse culture of learning.

Learn: EIS turns engagement into reflective academic excellence focusing on the needs of the individual learner to prepare for any level of further education.

Reflect: EIS learners acquire new knowledge and skills through ongoing reflection and engagement.

Mission Statement

EIS aims to create life-long learners who have the tools needed for a successful future as respectful and responsible citizens in local and global societies.

Introduction

“Schools have a duty of care to protect all children enrolled in the school to prevent them from harm, and act with a sense of urgency if a child is at risk of harm. All actions on child protection should be taken with the best interests of the child.” (International Taskforce on Child Protection, 2015)

EIS is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and the prevention of child maltreatment in any form. At EIS, we strive to create a culture where students feel safe and able to talk freely, believing that they will be listened to and taken seriously. We recognise that child maltreatment can happen in any school / organisation. Protecting the welfare of our students is the role of **all EIS staff**, including teachers, administration, coaches, volunteers and any other adults working at the school / in the school building.

The purpose of this policy is to inform and provide guidance to EIS staff and parents in matters related to safeguarding and child protection. We are dedicated to educating and supporting our staff, parents and students to help develop protective behaviours, recognise signs of maltreatment and provide appropriate support when necessary.

This policy has been informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Danish Law / Esbjerg Kommune (Familierådgivningen), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019), the World Health Organisation and International Task Force on Child Protection (CIS) as they have set the standards for safeguarding in schools worldwide.

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1. Definitions

1.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the responsibility schools have to make sure their staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children. Safeguarding at EIS refers to everything we can do to:

- Protect students from harm
- Prevent impairment of student's health and development
- Ensure that our students grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promote the wellbeing of students
- Take action to enable all students to have the best outcomes

1.2 Child Protection

Child protection is the core element of safeguarding and refers to the process of protecting a child from a situation that is causing significant harm or that is likely to do so.

All references made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and teenagers under the age of 18 years.

2. Information about and indicators of child maltreatment

2.1 Definitions and types of child maltreatment

EIS has adopted the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by the World Health Organization: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment (including failure to act to prevent harm) resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

Definitions of child neglect and abuse are complex and differ between cultures. The definition given above covers a broad spectrum of child maltreatment.

The most referred to types of child maltreatment are:

- **Neglect:** isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure to meet children's basic physical / psychological needs and is likely to result in serious impairment of health and development. This includes a lack of food, medical attention, supervision, clothing, etc.
- **Physical abuse:** the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in physical harm. This includes hitting, kicking, punching, biting, burning, shaking, drowning, smothering and giving drugs or alcohol.
- **Sexual abuse:** the involvement of a child in sexual acts that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, for which the child is not developmentally prepared or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. This includes kissing, touching genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse, oral sex, encouraging to look at pornography and child sexual exploitation.
- **Emotional abuse:** isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or humiliating and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment, which have a high probability of damaging a child's health or development.

Children can suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse from both adults and other children.

2.2 Possible indicators of child maltreatment

There are many possible indicators or signs of child maltreatment. However, these signs are not always a reason for concern. Conversely, some children might be at risk without showing any signs of harm. Therefore, it is important to listen to your feelings and to report concerns if you believe a student needs help (see 'Reporting process' below).

Possible indicators or symptoms of neglect are:

- Delayed development
- Being hungry or tired all the time
- Poor hygiene, being unwashed (including clothes)
- Untreated medical conditions
- Missing school or difficulties with schoolwork
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn or difficulty making friends
- Parents are uninterested in the child's academic performance or don't respond to repeated communications from the school

Possible indicators / symptoms of physical abuse are:

- Unexplained and frequent bruises, welts, fractures, burns or cuts on any part of the body
- Injuries reflecting the shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Depression and anxiety and / or aggression and violence
- Withdrawn or problems with relationships and socialising
- Inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries
- Running away

Possible indicators / symptoms of sexual abuse are:

- Sexual knowledge, behaviour or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Anal or vaginal soreness, STDs or pregnancy
- Sleep problems and bed-wetting or soiling
- Negative thoughts / not looking after themselves / low self-esteem
- Aggressive behaviour, risk taking and missing school or running away
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual

Possible indicators / symptoms of emotional abuse are:

- Possible delayed physical, emotional and mental development
- Low self-esteem
- Being unable to socialise or play well with others
- Fearful of making mistakes
- Self-harm

- Sudden speech disorders or neurotic behaviour.

This list is not exhaustive. Please share any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Leader or another member of the Child Protection Team (see 'Key contacts' below).

2.3 Grooming

In the context of child protection, grooming refers to the process where an adult communicates with a child or with the people who care for, supervise or have the authority for the child with the intention to facilitate the child's involvement in sexual activities. Grooming is a deliberate process of a perpetrator. Perpetrators will try to manipulate perceptions to create an opportunity to offend while avoiding discovery / disclosure by the child.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activities but is used to facilitate sexual activity at a later time. Grooming behaviours include (but are not limited to) the following behaviours: spending inappropriate 'special' time with a child, developing relationships with the child's family, showing a special favour to one child (but not to other children), inappropriate gift giving, asking a child to keep the relationship a secret, inappropriate communication or meetings outside of school, testing boundaries, e.g. undressing in front of a child, talking about sex and encouraging / accidental inappropriate physical contact. Grooming can also happen online, where perpetrators are able to use a masked identity.

Behaviour should only be seen as grooming if there is evidence of a pattern of behaviour that is consistent with grooming a child for sexual activity and if there is no other explanation for this behaviour.

2.4 Peer-on-peer abuse

All EIS Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can arise between students. Peer-on-peer abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse affecting children.

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual and emotional abuse between children. This includes (cyber)bullying, relationship abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth violence, domestic violence and abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and / or prejudice-based violence, including gender-based violence. Online Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element. Examples of online abuse include, sexting, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered online, the online distribution of sexualised content or harassment. These behaviours should never be tolerated or normalised.

As behaviours take place on a spectrum, it is important to understand where a child's behaviour falls on this spectrum. This knowledge is essential to be able to respond appropriately. Information about student behavioural expectations and consequences for misbehaviour can be found in the 'Family Handbook 2019 – 2020'. EIS uses the 'Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool' ([Brook Traffic Light Tool](#)) to distinguish between different levels of student's sexual behaviours and to be able to respond appropriately according to the level of concern.

If you believe a child is a risk / causes harm to himself / herself or to others this should be reported to the DSL or School Counsellor as soon as possible (see 'reporting process' below). Should an allegation of peer-on-peer abuse be made, all students involved (whether the victim or perpetrator) will be treated as 'at risk'.

3. Reporting concerns

At EIS, we support all children, and we acknowledge that child maltreatment can occur in every community regardless of gender, wealth, religion, culture or ethnicity. We listen to all our students without judging and are prepared to report concerns.

3.1 Key contacts - Child protection team

Contact with the child protection team may be made at any time and is not restricted to school opening hours.

Head of School	Sara Vayas Pedersen	s.vayapedersen@esbjergis.dk +
Deputy Head of School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Linda Grimstrup	L.Grimstrup@esbjergis.dk +4551164114
School Counsellor Deputy DSL	Andrea Guerrón Araque	a.araque@esbjergis.dk +4531322785

3.2 Whistleblowing

All EIS staff have a responsibility to report any concerns regarding safeguarding and child protection. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without the fear of repercussion. Concerns should be reported to the DSL or School Counsellor (see 'key contacts' above).

3.3 Student self-reporting

In many cases, abuse or neglect is discovered via student self-reporting. In the case that a student confides in an EIS staff member that they are the victim of maltreatment, this person should:

- Believe and listen to the student
- Respond calmly to the information the student provides
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing to tell, e.g. 'thank you for sharing'.
- Reassure the student that they are not to blame for the behaviour of others
- Tell the student that you will help them by contacting the people who will make sure that their voice is heard, valued, respected and acted upon
- Try not to leave the student alone immediately after a disclosure
- Start the reporting process immediately (see details below)

Under NO circumstances should EIS staff members promise confidentiality or try to resolve the issue themselves.

3.4 Reporting process

The following steps outline the process of reporting suspected child maltreatment at EIS. It is important that all EIS staff are familiar with this procedure and follow it if need arises.

1. If you have any reason to **suspect** that a student is being maltreated (neglected, physically, sexually or emotionally abused) or **encounter evidence** of maltreatment you must immediately report this to the DSL or School Counsellor.

Do not investigate this any further yourself before speaking to the DSL or School Counsellor.

In Denmark, educational professionals have a legal obligation to report abuse, and as an employee at EIS you **do not** have a choice about whether you choose to pass this information on. Passing on the information is important to protect both the child(ren) and yourself.

2. The DSL and School Counsellor will gather the necessary information. Once the appropriate information is gathered this information will be taken to the Head of School.

The Head of School, DSL and School Counsellor will decide on the next appropriate step to maintain and protect the safety of the child/children involved. This will often include working with the appropriate Danish authorities (Familierådgivningen or the police).

3. The DSL and School Counsellor will work directly with Familierådgivningen and the police if this is the outcome of the decision.
4. After a decision has been made, the Head of School, DSL and School Counsellor will ensure that the appropriate people are informed of the process and outcome.

The legal obligation to report concerns is not only professional but also personal. If the child protection team disagrees with your concern, you still have a duty to report. As a professional, you can fill out the 'Underretning om udsatte børn/unge (professionelle)' form on www.esbjerg.dk/boern-og-unge/bekymret-for-et-barn or contact the family counselling service immediately (see 'External contacts' list below).

3.5 Emergency situations

There can be many different situations in which to act urgently. Immediate action is required if:

- You are watching a drunk parent / other adult pick up a student from school and it is necessary to intervene.
- You see a parent / other adult hard-hitting a child in school, on the playground or in connection with a school event.
- A student confides in you about severe maltreatment at home.

These are only a few examples of situations that require immediate action. The most important thing is that you listen to your gut feeling and act on what you see. **In case of an emergency, you must contact the police on 112.**

Do not inform parents about contact with the police in cases of suspected domestic physical or sexual abuse. The reason for this is that it can have a great impact on the child's safety and the police's ability to secure any evidence. It is up to the Family counselling service, in collaboration with the police, to decide when and how parents are informed.

3.6 Low Level Concerns

At EIS, we are committed to create a culture in which **all** concerns about students and safeguarding are shared responsibly and with the right person, are recorded (see [Record Form](#)) and dealt with appropriately. This includes concerns that do not meet the threshold for reporting. Low level concerns are not limited to safeguarding but could relate to behaviour that doesn't meet the standards we expect at EIS (see 'Staff behaviour / Code of conduct' below and the 'behavior expectations' in the Family Handbook).

To create a safe and open culture, it is important that the expected behaviours are lived, monitored and reinforced and that all adults feel confident to share low level concerns with the DSL or School Counsellor so they can respond to any breaches of the staff code of conduct, student behavior expectations or other concerns.

The DSL and School Counsellor will regularly review low level concerns that have been shared with them to ensure that these concerns are handled appropriately, any patterns of behaviour are noticed, and no concerns meet the threshold for reporting.

3.7 Confidentiality

All EIS staff are expected to treat information they receive about students and families in a discreet and confidential manner. EIS staff will never promise confidentiality to children or adults about matters related to safeguarding or child protection. However, they will ensure that all information is treated sensitively. EIS staff will not share information with anyone who does not have a clear need to know.

Information about concerns should only be shared with the DSL, School Counsellor or Head of School. They will ensure that appropriate action is taken and pass on the information in confidence only to people who need to know for the best interests of the child.

3.8 External contacts

Purpose	Organisation / Place	Contact
Emergency	Police, Ambulance or fire services	112
Reporting Child Maltreatment	Familierådgivningen Police (general services)	+45 76163508 https://www.esbjerg.dk/boern-og-unge/bekymret-for-et-barn 114
Child Psychiatric Service	Psykiatrisk Akutmodtagelse Esbjerg (for children)	+45 99 44 67 00 Gl. Vardevej 101, 6715 Esbjerg N
Medical Services	Sydvestjysk Sygehus	+45 79 18 20 00 Finsensgade 35, 6700 Esbjerg

4. Prevention: Commitment to Safeguarding – Adults working with children

EIS is committed to child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in its care. All staff members are expected to share this commitment.

4.1 Safe Recruitment

At EIS, we've implemented hiring practices to ensure the safety of our students. We follow the recommendations for Screening and Assessment Practices of the International Task Force on Child Protection (2016), which includes:

- Candidate profiles: EIS requires a thorough personal and professional profile of each candidate.
- Reference checks: the hiring procedure includes the process by which EIS reviews and validates references.
- Referee Verification: the hiring procedure includes the process of verifying the identities of candidate's referees.
- Credential Verification: EIS has clear guidelines for the review and verification of personal and professional histories and documentation.
- Criminal background and Internet Checks: EIS requires background, criminal record and internet checks as a precondition of employment.
- Interview and Advertising Practices: EIS makes its commitment to child safety openly known through its interviewing and advertising practices.

4.2 Staff Code of Conduct

All staff at EIS have a duty of care to keep students safe and protect them from maltreatment and safeguarding concerns. This code of conduct has been developed to establish a safe learning environment which safeguards our students and a safe working environment that reduces the risk of staff members being falsely accused of inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour. The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide a clear framework of expected and unexpected behaviour which all staff members and volunteers are required to adhere to. This code is not exhaustive. There will be times when staff are required to use their professional judgement in situations that are not covered by this code. In all cases, we expect staff members to adopt the highest possible standards of personal conduct.

4.2.1 Dress and appearance

EIS staff are expected to dress appropriately for their professional role, which means that they will dress decently and appropriately for the tasks they do in school. Staff members will not wear clothing which can be viewed as offensive, revealing, sexually provocative, has political slogans or may be considered discriminatory.

4.2.2 Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion

There might be occasions when EIS Staff receive gifts from students and their parents as a token of appreciation, e.g. before the Christmas break or at the end of the school year. This is usually acceptable. However, Staff must make sure that they do not accept gifts that might be seen as a bribe or lead the 'giver' to expect a special treatment. Also, staff are not allowed to accept gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Staff are not allowed to give personal gifts to students or their families as this could be seen as a gesture to either bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' is expected in return.

Any rewards given to students should be in line with agreed practise, e.g. EIS House Points, certificates to recognize IB Learner Profile traits, and other agreed reward systems. EIS staff should ensure that selection processes of students are both clear and fair and avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when students are excluded from activities.

4.2.3 Infatuations and crushes

We recognise that students can feel attracted to a staff member and / or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. Staff should make every effort to ensure that their behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not encourage this and be aware that such 'crushes' may carry a risk of their words or action being misinterpreted. Any staff member who receives a report, overhears something or notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, about a student having a crush on either themselves or another staff member, should immediately report this to the Leadership Team. This way, appropriate early intervention can be taken to prevent possible escalation / distress for those concerned.

4.2.4 Communication with children (including the use of technology)

EIS Staff are not allowed to share their phone number(s) with EIS students, to have EIS students on their personal Social Media accounts or join students' personal Social Network accounts. There are no circumstances where this would be necessary or professional.

4.2.5 Physical contact

There are occasions when it is appropriate or even necessary to have physical contact with students. However, any physical contact with students should be in response to the child's needs. Furthermore, physical contact should be of limited duration and appropriate to the student's age, stage of development, gender and background. Not all students feel comfortable about physical contact, and this should be recognised. Wherever possible, adults will seek the student's permission before contact is made. It is important to listen to and observe the student's reaction and, if possible, explain to the student why physical contact is necessary. Physical contact should only be initiated by staff members if the student's safety is at risk. In this case, incident and intervention should be recorded using the 'Cause for Concern / Incident Slip' ([Incident Slip](#)) and to share a copy with the homeroom teacher and the school office (incident file). Parents should always be informed when a physical intervention has been necessary.

If physical contact is appropriate, depends on the situation and circumstances. An action that is appropriate with one student, in one set of circumstances, might be inappropriate in another situation or with a different student. Therefore, staff are expected to use their professional judgement at all times.

4.2.6 Behaviour management

Any form of physical punishment, degrading or humiliating as well as the use of demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is completely unacceptable. Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff should follow the school's behaviour guidelines (see Family Handbook).

4.2.7 Physical intervention / restraint

There may be times when it's necessary for EIS staff to restrain a student or to intervene physically. The use of force in order to prevent students from harming themselves or others should be a last resort and is only allowed in the following cases:

- To prevent students from hurting themselves or others
- To prevent students from seriously damaging property
- To prevent students from anything that would risk their safety (e.g. leaving the classroom or school building)
- To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have repeatedly refused to follow the instruction to leave the room.

Under NO circumstance will physical force be used as a punishment.

Staff members are only allowed to use reasonable force to restrain students, which means that they will use no more force than needed in the situation. Restraint should never involve hurting a student or restricting a student's breathing. During an incident, the staff member restraining can offer verbal reassurance to the student. The restraint should only last as long as the student or others are at harm.

After physically intervening / restraining a child, staff members are required to fill out the 'Cause for Concern / Incident Slip' ([Incident Slip](#)) and to share a copy with the homeroom teacher, child protection team and school office (incident file). Parents should always be informed when a physical intervention has been necessary.

4.2.8 Working with students alone

EIS Staff are discouraged from working with students alone unless necessary for education purposes. At these times, no physical contact should be made, and the doors should be left open.

4.2.9 Transporting students

In certain situations, staff may be asked to transport students (e.g. during a school trip). However, this is never a requirement and all staff members have the right to refuse transporting students. Before transporting students, a risk assessment has to be carried out covering the health and safety of staff and to manage any known risks. Furthermore, when transporting students, there should be at least 3 students in one vehicle / with one staff member. It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so. Wherever possible it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles.

There may be times or situations where students have to be transported individually (e.g. when a student is injured or ill during a school trip and has to visit a doctor). In this case, a member of the Leadership team must be informed.

4.2.10 *School trips*

Staff members have a duty to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments before each school trip. This includes the assessment of any risks to students, staff and others during a school trip, and the measures that should be taken to minimise these risks. When organising school trips, staff should pay careful attention to ensuring there is a safe staff / student ratio and a gender mix of staff.

When school trips include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Students, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

It is not acceptable for staff to consume alcohol on school trips, when they are responsible for either students or other staff members.

4.2.11 *Photography, videos and other images*

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should staff be expected to use their personal equipment to take images of students at or on behalf of the school or setting. If staff members choose to use their personal equipment to take images of students, all images should be transferred to school equipment and removed from personal devices before leaving school grounds.

4.2.12 *Curriculum*

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussions about sexually explicit topics or topics that are of a political or sensitive nature. Staff are expected to use careful judgement when responding to sensitive questions. The DSL can help to guide teachers in these circumstances. Furthermore, care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the identified learning outcomes.

4.3 Volunteers

All volunteers who work with small groups / individual students at EIS are required to have a criminal background check completed. Parents who volunteer to chaperone a school trip, must have a criminal background check completed, only if no other EIS staff members attend the trip or if the trip involves an overnight stay. Furthermore, all volunteers must be made aware of the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and adhere to the staff code of conduct above.

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