
The Institute for Research in Schools
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Version	2.0
Approved by Trustees	May 2020
Chair of Trustees	Humphrey Battcock
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Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy applies to all staff and stakeholders.

- Staff – members of staff directly employed by IRIS
- Stakeholders – other people that work with IRIS, but not directly employed by IRIS, and may come into contact with students through IRIS including (but not limited to) Trustees, research associates, consultants, academics, employees from external organisations such as scientific organisations, industry, the media and promotional organisations
- Students – students who have undertaken an IRIS project and are aged 18 and under
- DSL – IRIS designated safeguarding lead
- DCPO – IRIS designated child protection officer

1. Policy purpose and framework

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Keep children safe in education
- Protect children and young people who receive IRIS’s services. This includes children of adults who use our services
- Staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection

IRIS believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

2. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Scotland Act 1995
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998Po
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004



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- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years
 - Statutory guidance for organisation which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
 - Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, carers; HM Government 2015

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Role of the designated safeguarding officer
- Anti-bribery
- Bullying and Harassment (Investigations)
- Bullying and Harassment (Complaints)
- Diversity
- Equal opportunities and dignity at work
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Social Media and Digital Comms
- E-safety
- Whistleblowing

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Recognising that Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone involved with the organisation.
- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL) (England) and Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) (Scotland) for children and young people



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- The DSL and DCPO and lead board member will undergo specialist training every two years
 - Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures, and a code of conduct for all staff
 - Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
 - Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through catch ups, support, annual training, appraisals and keeping a register of training and quality assurance measures
 - Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and child protection and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one-to-one discussions
 - Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
 - Using our procedures to manage an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
 - Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
 - Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

3. Contact details



All concerns in England must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Dr Jo Foster, info@researchinschools.org

All concerns in Scotland must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO):

Laura Tyzack, info@researchinschools.org

If you have any concerns about the actions or response of the DSL or DCPO then you must report your concerns to the lead board member for Safeguarding.

If the disclosure or concern is related to a child in school or college education, the IRIS DSL and DCPO should immediately pass the concern on to the DSL or DCPO within the school, as well as taking their own action to report to the relevant authorities where necessary.

If you have any concerns about how a workplace child protection issue is being handled, then you can call the following NSPCC whistleblowing advice line – **0800 028 0285** or email help@nspcc.org.uk

If you think a child is in immediate danger do not delay – call the police on **999** or call the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 straight away.

If you are worried about a child, but unsure, contact the NSPCC helpline to speak to a trained counsellor on 0808 800 5000.

To access further guidance about child exploitation please contact CEOP:
www.ceop.police.uk

The FGM Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015) made it a legal duty to report Female Genital Mutilation. The law requires teachers in England and Wales (and other health and social care professionals) to make a report to the police when they have reasonable concerns or suspect FGM.

If you are worried that a child may be at risk of FGM you can make an anonymous call to the NSPCC free 24-hour FGM helpline on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

3. Allegations against IRIS staff and stakeholders

An allegation may relate to any member of IRIS staff or stakeholder who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or



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- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Three strands for consideration

1. A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; and
3. Consideration by an employer/organisation of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

Supporting the child

- In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care services, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.
- In the case of a false allegation by the child against a member of IRIS staff, the child will continue to be supported throughout, and after, the investigation without prejudice.

Managing allegations

- Where the allegation is in relation to a member of staff, then in the first instance, the DSL or DCPO will act as the case manager and should immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer(s) within the local authority (the LADO in England or Social Services in Scotland). When the DSL and DCPO are unavailable, or where the DSL or DCPO are the subject of an allegation, the board lead, should act as the case manager.
- Where the allegation is in relation to a stakeholder, the DSL or DCPO will refer this to the stakeholder's employer's DSL/DCPO immediately.

Supporting employees

- IRIS has a duty of care to its employees. IRIS will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and the case manager should provide the employee with a named contact (a staff member that's not the DSL and DCPO) if they are suspended.
- Suspension should be carefully considered and is not automatic. However, IRIS will immediately withdraw that member of staff from any contact with children until the allegation is fully investigated.
- It is essential that any allegation is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step.



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- Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children’s social care services is unnecessary, the designated officer(s) from the local authority should discuss the next steps with the appointed case manager (usually the DSL or DCPO).

Definitions when determining outcomes

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

Next steps for IRIS staff

If a substantiated outcome is determined, the IRIS staff member will be subject to IRIS’ Grievance and Disciplinary procedure.

If a malicious, false or unsubstantiated outcome is determined, the school will be notified and the IRIS staff member will be supported after the investigation without prejudice.

Supporting parents

- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- Parents or carers, the child’s school DSL or DCPO should be told of any allegations if they are not already aware, unless a strategy discussion is required where advice should be sought first.
- Parents or carers and the child’s school DSL or DCPO should be kept informed about progress, and told the outcome where no criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.

4. Recording concerns

Staff and stakeholders should use either the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Disclosure form** (for recording a disclosure made by a child), or the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Concern form** (for recording concerns about a child) to make written records.

Templates are included in this policy^{1, 2} and are also stored on the IRIS shared drive. Staff should always keep an open mind when recording and distinguish between fact and opinion, considering carefully which details to include or omit. If possible, the direct words of the child should be included, and it should be indicated when words are a direct quote.



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- Records should be made as soon as possible after the event/concern is raised and within 24 hours.
 - Records should contain the date, time, people present, anything said (verbatim if possible) and any action taken.
 - Records should include observations of parents and carers and details of family circumstances where possible.
 - Professional opinion should be set apart from factual observations and labelled as such. Judgemental language should be avoided.
 - Staff should be encouraged to ask open questions when seeking the facts of an event or concern, and not come too quickly to an (adult) conclusion which could be seen as 'leading the witness'.
 - Discussion should take place between the person with the concern and the DSL or DCPO where possible to reduce the chances of something being missed/misinterpreted. Staff need to share their observations, concerns, any action already taken and what action they think should be taken next.
 - This record should be passed on to the DSL of the child's school or college at the earliest opportunity, and within 24 hours of the allegation.
 - All electronic records will be stored in a password protected file and all paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the home address of the DSL or DCPO.

Referring to the correct person

It is important that child protection concerns are handled sensitively and only shared with others on a need to know basis. Once the concern is shared with the DSL or DCPO more advice may need to be sought from another DSL or DCPO, the Local Authority or the NSPCC helpline as to whether a further referral is necessary to protect the child.

