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CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING POLICY

I. Introduction

This policy has been developed by Burundi English School to establish, strengthen and maintain a permanent safe environment for our students and therefore by so doing, reaffirm our full commitment to the cause of child protection and our compliance with the existing local and international laws and regulations regarding the concept.

Safeguarding means protecting children from maltreatment, ensuring that children are growing in circumstances of safe and effective care.

We recognize that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame himself and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self -worth.

Therefore, where a child is suffering an action should be taken immediately.

II. B.E.S child protection principles

- Our overall role as a school is to provide a caring and inclusive learning environment that promote a positive, physical, emotional, social and moral growth of the individual child.
- We promote equality of protection. This means that all students have the same opportunity to engage in our activities safely in their gender, racial, religious, age and ability diversity.
- We recognize that the school has to provide stability in the lives of children who have been abused or those at risks.
- We must work towards providing an environment in which children feel secure, respected and know how to approach adults when they are facing difficulties.
- We believe that self esteem can be achieved through the curriculum as well as our relationship. Child development must be supported in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience.
- Our school is inclined to liaising and working together with other competent support structures and agencies in matters related to the safeguarding of children.
- Information about our former students about whom there have been serious concerns is to be transmitted under confidential cover to their new schools.
- We acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff to safeguard students.
- Burundi English school recognizes that all matters related to child protection are confidential.



- All staff members should be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise child's safety or well being.
- All staff must be aware that they have professional responsibilities to share information with legal authorized agencies in order to safeguard children.
- We recognize that the emotional health of children who have experienced or witnessed violence is often affected in a negative way.
- Recruiting individuals who have been previously involved in child abuse cases is strongly discouraged at B.E.S.

III. The aim of this policy is:

- To provide an environment in which all children feel safe, secure, valued, respected, confident and know how to approach adults if they are facing any difficulties, believing they will be listened to.
- Ensure a child centered and inclusive learning approach by keeping children' rights.
- To raise the awareness of the teaching and non teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuses.
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide effective means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm and ensure the school contributes to the assessment of needs and supports packages for those children.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in case of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective collaboration with other agencies like the police or local administration.



IV. To meet the objectives mentioned above, B.E.S will ensure that:

- All students are given the same chances to access a safe and inclusive learning environment.
- All staff members are sensitized to the importance of child protection through various means such as workshops and access of copies of the school's child protection policy.
- Elaborating procedures for dealing with child abuse cases.
- The Child Protection Policy is evaluated and updated annually.
- Students are sensitized to their rights and responsibilities by internal and external actors.
- A Child Protection Officer is appointed and provided with necessary and appropriate training facilities.
- A regular record of child protection activity at school is kept.

V. Recognizing signs of child abuse

a. Categories of Abuse.

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

b. Signs of Abuse in Children

The following non -specific signs may indicate that something is wrong.

- Sudden change in behavior
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive behavior
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self esteem
- Self-injury



- Depression



c. Risk indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that an abuse has occurred.

However:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated person, manager or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague.
- May require consultation with and/or referral.

The absence of those factors does not mean that an abuse or neglect has not occurred too.

In an abusive relationship, the child may.

- Appear frightened
- Act in inappropriate way

d. Recognizing Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent about an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Parents are not interested by an accident or injury.
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.
- Bite marks can leave clear impressions of teeth.

For this case, a medical opinion should be requested.

- Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.
 - Circular burns from cigarettes
 - Old scars indicating previous burns which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.
- Fractures.

There is a ground of concern if.

- The history of the fracture is unclear



- The new fracture is associated with the old one.
- The fracture caused loss of movement.

e. Recognizing Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognize as the signs are usually behavioral rather than physical.
- The manifestation of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.
- The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse

f. Assessment

In order to fully determine the nature of the incident, the following factors should be considered.

The presence of abuse in terms of.

- **Equality**
 - consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development.
- **Consent**
 - Agreement including all the following:
 1. Age, maturity and developmental stage.
 2. Knowledge of society standards for what consent is being proposed.
 3. Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives.
 4. Voluntary decision
 5. Mental competence
- **Used strategies**
 - The young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional treats. Some may use physical force or brutality.

VI. Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. All staff members, volunteers even visitors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring and inclusive environment that promotes social, physical, emotional, and moral development of the individual child.

a. Appointed Child Protection Officer's responsibilities:



The A.C.P.O is responsible for.

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible or occurred abuses.
- Keeping written record of concerns about children.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from students' records.

b. The B.E.S staff

All staff members are called up on

- To participate actively in the implementation of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Offer a frank support and collaboration to the A.C.P.O.

VII. PROCEDURES

a. Claim against staff

- We understand that a student may make a claim against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made or information about it is received, the member of staff receiving that information will immediately inform the headteacher.
- The headteacher will then discuss the content of the claim with the A.C.P.O
- The ACPO will assess the case and decide to resolve it internally (referring to the schools' written internal complaint procedures) or externally (resorting to local appropriate institutions)
- The ACPO will write a report of the case, the decision made and submit it to the hierarchies.

b. Claim against another student

The procedures are the same as the claims against staff. However, for this case, parents of both students have to be summoned.

c. Physical Intervention

- We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to other persons.
- Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- Staff who are likely to need use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.
- We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.



- We recognize that touch is appropriate in the context or working with children. Therefore, during the orientation meeting, all staff members will be given safe practice guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

d. Anti -Bullying

- Our school policy on anti bullying is set in the students' handbook. We acknowledge that to allow or excuse bullying may lead to violation of a child's rights. This includes all forms of bullying e.g. imitation, tribalism, racism, gender related bullying.
- We keep record of bullying incidents.

e. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can be rape, sexual harassment, the use of sexually explicit multimedia contents, forced marriage, violation of public decency.

For any of these cases, with consent of the involved parties or not, the local legal and competent organizations have to be alerted immediately.

f. Prevention

- We recognize that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and a philosophy of protection.

The school will therefore:

- Work to establish and maintain an environment where students feel secure and encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Initiate regular consultation with students.
- Ensure that all the students know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the school guidance for the use of technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile phones and their associated risks.
- The school will organize conversation meetings with teenagers to inform and exchange information about human body change.



- Any kind of corporal punishment is banned at BES (see the staff handbook)
- All physical and emotional abuses are also banned and should be reported and treated properly as soon as they occur.

Appendix

B.E.S. Internal referral Form for Reporting safeguarding/Child Protection Concern

Person making referral:	Date
Position:	
Child 's Name:	
Parents' names and address:	Names of siblings in school and Grade?
Child currently on the 'at risk 'register? Yes/no	
Safeguarding Child Protection Officer informed of concerns? Yes /No	
Other staff informed of concerns? Write their names	
Nature of suspected abuse?	
Evidences:	
Actions taken:	
Any witnesses? Yes or no Please write names:	
Signature of the persons making the referral	