



## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

English Country Schools is a British Council Accredited residential English language summer school and online service provider for 8–17-year-olds. We seek to maintain a safe and supportive environment for the children in our care. We accept and recognise our responsibilities as follows:

- to safeguard the welfare of children who join our courses
- to continually develop awareness of any issues which might harm these children
- to avoid making ourselves vulnerable to suspicion of any form of abuse

We will endeavour to safeguard children as follows:

- by adopting child protection guidelines and accepted procedures
- by providing children and staff with codes of behaviour and ensuring they understand what those are
- by sharing information and acting promptly and professionally to any concerns

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for English Country Schools is Kaja Gumińska (Course Manager) and the Deputy DSL is Peter Bodri (Director). Both the DSL and Deputy DSL have completed appropriate DSL-specific safeguarding training and receive regular updates in line with statutory guidance. All other staff receive basic safeguarding awareness training.

English Country Schools (ECS) commits to reviewing this policy every 12 months and will seek to involve staff and students in its development.

- This policy applies to all children attending our courses regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- A 'child' or 'student' or 'pupil' in the context of this policy refers to anyone under the age of 18 who will attend, is attending or has attended English Country Schools.
- 'Safeguarding' refers to our commitment to reduce risk and provide appropriate general care for children.
- 'Child Protection' refers to our commitment to protect children from any kind of abuse.
- This policy covers all employees and any other adult involved in delivering courses for children in our care.

- English Country Schools will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults who work with our pupils but are not directly employed by ECS (eg. host school staff, transport contractors, sports coaches) have enhanced DBS certificates and are aware of our code of conduct.
- This policy applies to both real world and online environments.
- This policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Children Act 1989, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the United Kingdom Government in 1991)

### **Our assumptions / principles in framing this document:**

1. All children have the right to be treated with respect and to be protected from harm.
2. We welcome students from all backgrounds and will not permit discrimination by students or staff on the grounds of religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. We will show particular sensitivity to students who are from territories in the midst of internal or international conflict.
3. Adults working with our pupils must recognise the trust placed in them by children and must treat this trust and this power with the highest responsibility.
4. Any sexual relationship or activity by an adult involving a child or any attempt to encourage this (= 'grooming') is unacceptable and will lead to disciplinary and legal action.
5. All children have the right to say 'No' if any person tries to do something to them which they feel is wrong.
6. All children have the right to be supported against bullies.
7. All children must feel they can tell an adult about any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.
8. All children must know that if they go to an adult for help, they will be listened to seriously and supported.

### **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

On a day-to-day basis all adults working with our pupils must agree to the following code of conduct. This will also help to protect adults against finding themselves in situations that might be misconstrued as being harmful to children.

- **Treat all pupils with respect regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation**
- **Maintain a professional relationship with all pupils and avoid exclusivity**  
Act in a friendly, supportive manner to all pupils but do not make particular friends. Try to recognise if a student is developing a 'crush' on you. Do nothing that might be construed as encouraging this. Never flirt with a student or make sexually suggestive or provocative comments, even in fun. If a child makes such comments, enforce these boundaries in your response.
- **Do not act aggressively towards a pupil verbally or physically**  
Never hit, throttle, push, kick or otherwise act aggressively either physically or verbally towards a child even in jest. Do not engage in rough physical games, including horseplay. When you have to admonish a child, focus on the unacceptable behaviour, not the person. Eg. 'That was a dangerous thing to do because....' rather than 'You stupid fool, you could have...' Children can be very

demanding. Recognise if you are reaching the limits of your patience and remove yourself safely from the situation.

- **Try to avoid being alone with a pupil or situations and actions that might be misconstrued**

If you are unable to avoid being alone, for example if a child wants to talk to you privately, try to find a place where you can talk while still being seen by other people or where a colleague is discreetly present. Do not share changing rooms, washrooms, toilets or bedrooms with children. Always warn children before entering these places. Avoid being in these places with children unless necessary and pay particular attention to avoid being alone with a child in these places.

If you have to touch a child – for example to comfort a crying child, if someone is injured or if you have to separate two fighting children – try to ensure that there are other students and if possible, adults present. See separate notes below regarding 1:1 online teaching.

- **Listen to what pupils tell you and report any sensitive incident or disclosure**

Follow our guidelines on how to react if a child discloses something to you. Always log and record any sensitive incident as soon as possible after it happens and ensure that the log is seen and signed by the DSL or Deputy DSL

- **Do not communicate with any pupil using social media**

See 'Electronic contact with children' below.

- **Smoking (including vaping), alcohol and illegal drugs must be avoided at all times when you are working with children**

## **OUR EXPECTATIONS OF PUPILS (Student Code of Conduct)**

We expect pupils to:

- treat each other and staff with respect regardless of age, gender, colour, race or religion
- participate in the academic and recreation programme to the best of their ability
- mix and speak English among the different nationalities on the course
- follow school rules and obey all reasonable instructions and requests from staff
- talk to us if there is a problem so that we can try to help

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

Child Abuse is most often used to describe ways in which children are harmed with damage to their physical or mental health. There are 4 broad categories of abuse as follows:

- physical: through hitting, shaking, squeezing etc.
- sexual: through inappropriate physical contact, the taking of indecent images of children, or the encouragement of sexual activity by children for the purpose of adult gratification.
- emotional: through persistent lack of affection, unrealistic adult demands, verbal bullying including cyber-bullying.
- neglect: failing to provide basic needs of food, proper clothing, safe supervision.

## **Identifying child abuse**

It can be difficult to identify child abuse as it has various forms. Below are some typical indicators to watch for:

- unexplained injuries
- a child describing an abusive act that has happened to them
- another child telling you of their concern about a friend / fellow student
- sexually explicit behaviour in games / activities
- serious distrust of adults
- difficulty in making friends / socialising with other children

The last two might appear naturally as summer school is a new and strange environment for visiting children, sometimes from very different cultures. Be alert also to the possibility of (undiagnosed?) autism.

## **How to react if you suspect child abuse**

- If you notice any physical or behavioural signs, report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy DSL.
- If you suspect an adult is a threat to a child in any way, report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL, who will decide whether the matter meets the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Children's Social Care.
- If a child discloses abuse react calmly as follows:

<b>What to do</b>	<b>What not to do</b>
Stay calm	Remain calm and do not overreact. Assess whether the child may be at immediate risk.
Listen unconditionally	Don't probe for more information. Questioning the participant may affect how the disclosure is received at a later date.
Give time to the person to say what they want. It may help to remember TED: Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me	Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations
Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that you will need to inform the DSL in order to provide the best possible support	Don't promise to keep secrets or that everything will be OK (it might not)
Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy	Don't delay or try to deal with it yourself: listen and refer, don't investigate
Record in writing as near verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible and report to the school office	Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser. Don't 'gossip' with colleagues about what has been said to you. Don't make a child repeat a story unnecessarily

## **BULLYING**

Bullying - the deliberate and repeated act of causing another person to be unhappy - is perhaps the likeliest

threat to a child's wellbeing on our courses and is not tolerated. The Notes for Students sent to all students and parents before they attend a course state the following:

"NO BULLYING. People who abuse others verbally or physically will be cautioned and if this has no effect will be sent home."

Bullying can take many different forms; it may be physical, emotional, name-calling, showing a lack of respect for another's property, excluding somebody from a social group; there are many possibilities. One person 'having a joke' might be another person suffering bullying. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes it is done subtly and in such a way that children will be worried about telling staff what is happening. For this reason, it is vital that staff are vigilant in noticing changes in behaviour of children, particularly if they become withdrawn.

### **If you suspect bullying:**

1. Investigate all reports, however seemingly trivial.
2. Ensure that all reports of suspected bullying are recorded in the Incidents Book. Ensure also that the follow up and resolution / consequence is recorded.
3. Once it has been established that bullying has taken / is taking place, refer the incident to the Course Manager. With the Course Manager, explain to the person acting unkindly that their actions are unacceptable and tell them the effect they have had on another / others.
4. Ask them to consider an appropriate way of putting things right and, if necessary, support them in carrying out an apology.
5. Ensure that any apology / reconciliation is done with staff present so that it can be accurately recorded.
6. Alternatively, bring both parties (bully and bullied) together for a 'no blame' meeting. The aim is to clarify the situation through discussion and allow both sides to work out a solution that is satisfactory to them both. This will be logged and signed by a staff member.
7. Send details to the DSL who will inform parents of both parties what has happened and how it has been resolved.
8. If, after this meeting, the bullying continues then it must be seen as deliberate or that the perpetrator (for example if suffering from fits of anger) is unable to control himself or herself. The Course Manager will take immediate action to protect the bullied person and will begin procedures to restrict the activities of the bully. The DSL will keep parents of both parties fully informed.
9. Any further incidents of bullying by the same person will result in them being sent home as quickly as possible.

### **ELECTRONIC CONTACT WITH CHILDREN**

Staff must exercise the same discretion and maintain the same professional distance in any electronic contact with children (anyone under 18) as they would in normal day-to-day life. Electronic contact includes telephone communication (including texting) and online environments. In particular:

- Never initiate electronic contact with a child unless for clear pedagogical purposes that have been sanctioned by your employer.
- If a child contacts you electronically, keep your tone friendly, professional and neutral.

- Be wary of sharing personal information beyond what you would reasonably expect a child to share during an English lesson.
- If a child seeks to develop an inappropriate personal relationship with you electronically, do nothing to encourage this; inform your employer and send a copy of any relevant communications.
- If a child confides sensitive information to you electronically, such as details of abuse, react as shown in the table above, 'If a child discloses abuse'. Record the details and send a copy of all relevant communications to your employer.
- While a school may have good reasons to create an online social community, social forums such as Facebook present particular risks. Staff should not initiate or accept 'friendship' requests from children, however innocent these requests may seem, as this provides access to photos and other intimate details of each other's personal lives.

## ONLINE TEACHING

One-to-one online teaching presents a particular challenge as the relatively informal teaching situation combined with the regularity and intensity of 1:1 teaching might lead to deeper relationships being formed than occur in the normal classroom. It is important that this is governed by a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour by both pupils and teachers.

- All staff teaching online will be appropriately qualified, experienced and background checked in line with the school's Safer Recruitment Policy
- Teachers will be provided with separate training for teaching online, including best use of online resources and the minimisation of risks associated with online teaching including the lesson delivery platform.
- Pupils and parents will be sent and must agree to the following guidelines:
  - All contact – for example to arrange lesson times and schedules - should be via the school and not directly with the teacher.
  - Pupils must attend lessons in a professional manner, in appropriate clothing and in an appropriate location, for example not sitting in bed.
  - Pupils must identify themselves clearly by full name so that they can be admitted to the lesson.
  - Students must enter the lesson with their webcam on and keep it on the whole time.
  - Pupils and parents will be provided with the name and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Officer so that they can report any concerns.
  - Lesson will be recorded. Recordings provide useful review and revision material for pupils and teachers. Pupils must not share or publish recordings. Recordings also provide a deterrent to inappropriate behaviour and evidence in the event of any allegation.
- Teachers must agree to the following:
  - This Child Safeguarding Policy applies equally online and offline / in the real world.
  - Staff must take particular care to maintain a professional relationship with pupils they teach online.
  - Staff must ensure a safe online environment during lessons in line with staff training.
  - Staff will ensure that the teaching situation – including lighting, clothing, location and

physical background, noise or other interruptions – is professional.

- All contact with parents or pupils must be via the school.
- Staff must not propose or agree to provide additional or separate lessons for pupils other than via the school.
- Lessons will take place only using the school's account.
- Lessons will be monitored in real time.
- Lessons will be recorded.
- Specific advice on using Zoom platform for online lessons:
  - The 'waiting room' will be used and students must use their real name before being admitted to the lesson.
  - In group situations, lock the waiting room once the lesson starts.
  - Students may not enter the lesson or attend any part of the lesson without their webcam being switched on.
  - Students are not allowed to change their displayed names by default.
  - The private student-to-student chat feature will be disabled by default.
  - The share screen option for students will be disabled by default.
  - If you provide pupils with online content or links to online content such as You Tube videos, preview these in their entirety to ensure the content is age-appropriate.
  - If you share your computer screen, make sure no personal or inappropriate image or information is inadvertently shown.
  - At the end of lessons, the host must be the last person to leave the meeting.

## **IF AN ADULT IS ACCUSED OF ABUSE**

English Country Schools will:

- Immediately remove the adult from all possible contact with pupils
- Take immediate action to safeguard the child and follow local authority guidance, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Children's Social Care as appropriate.
- If there is evidence to support the allegation the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to the NSPCC who will advise on the next steps. This may include criminal prosecution and the informing of referees and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## **OTHER WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Prevent**

'Prevent' is a government strategy to stop people becoming involved in violent extremism and/or in supporting terrorism. It also aims to promote positive British core values, namely democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of other beliefs, race and sexual orientation. In the summer school context, our compliance with Prevent is largely covered by our codes of conduct and by our day-to- day enactment of British core values.

## **Sexual harassment**

Please see our separate Harassment Prevention Policy.

## **Risk assessments**

Activity and excursion risk assessments are kept in the activity planning room. Other risk assessments are provided to staff as necessary. Please read the ones that are applicable to your job in the school. A risk assessment must also be carried out and a form completed for each new recreational activity you organise.

## **Behaviour and discipline**

Advice for staff on disciplining is given in the document 'Notes for Staff'. The document 'Notes for Students and Parents' contains rules for students, our expectations of their behaviour and procedures for responding to a breach of discipline.

## **Supervision ratios**

An adequate adult presence must be maintained at all times. There is a comprehensive duty rota for staff working with each age group. Staff:student ratios in the school are currently 1:5 for 8 – 13-year-olds and 1:7 for 13 – 17-year-olds. Staff:student ratios for pupils on excursions are 1:10 for 8 – 13-year-olds and 1:15 for 13 – 17-year-olds.

## **Excursions**

Basic guidelines and 'what to do if' risk assessment for all excursions are contained in the document 'Excursions Guide and Risks'. This is to be displayed in the staff room.

## **Road safety**

Pupils are advised in the Notes for Students to take care with traffic driving on the left in England. All pupils practise crossing the road shortly after arrival as part of induction with their classroom teacher.

## **Arrival house meeting**

All pupils have house meetings the evening of arrival during which they are reminded to hand in any medicines. They are reminded of expected standards of behaviour, including the need to tell someone if they have a problem. Please see the document 'House Parents map' for further details.

## **Fire practice**

Emergency building evacuation procedures will be explained to staff at induction. All pupils take part in a walk-through fire practice on the evening of arrival so that they know how to exit the building and line up correctly. Any late-arriving pupils who miss the first evening practice must have their own walk-through practice with their house parent. A second practice with alarms will take place a few days after arrival.

## **First aid/medical care**

A list of qualified first aiders will be displayed in the staff room and outside the summer school office. The location of first aid items will be known to all staff and stocks will be regularly checked and topped up by the Welfare Officer. Medical information is requested from parents for all pupils prior to attending. Welfare notes on students are available to staff on a need-to-know basis. An alphabetical file is kept in the office containing, for each student, information likely to be needed quickly in emergency: child's full name, date of birth, home address; family contact details and alternative contact; name and contact details of child's doctor at home; TB vaccination record; any allergies or other medical details.

## **Effective communications**

Staff have the use of two-way radios to enable quick and effective communication, including emergency communication. Training is given at induction. Directors of ECS live on campus during the summer and are contactable 24-hour by mobile phone. All pupils are given ECS wristbands that carry the school's emergency contact number and must wear these on excursions. Younger pupils going off site are encouraged to wear a blue ECS cap to aid identification.

## **Training**

All English Country Schools staff are required to sign to say that they have read and understood this Safeguarding Policy and agree to the Code of Conduct. All staff will undertake an online training course. Successful completion will generate a personalised certificate that staff must bring with them to employment. Further clarification on Safeguarding / Child Protection will be given at induction.

### **Useful telephone numbers**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kaja Gumińska

24-hour on-site assistance (ECS Staff): +44 7598 130579

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Dorset: +44 1305221016

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): +44 1752 422577

NSPCC Helpline: +44 800 800 5000 <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Childline UK: +44 800 1111 <http://www.childline.org>

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service): +44 3000 200 190 <http://www.crb.gov.uk>

Social Services Dorset: +44 1305 228558 [info@dorsetlscb.co.uk](mailto:info@dorsetlscb.co.uk)

Social Services Dorset, out-of-hours: +44 1202 228866

Samaritans: +44 330 0945717 <http://www.samaritans.org.uk>

### **Related documents**

- **Safer Recruitment** describes how we extend child protection to employment policies.
- **Emergency Plan** describes how we aim to respond in critical situations such as a coach crash or armed intruder on campus.
- **Notes for Staff** includes information about suitable clothing, disciplining of pupils, policy on photos and videos, free time supervision, excursions.
- **Expulsion Procedure** describes how we try to minimise the emotional impact on pupils if we must expel them.
- **Excursion Guide and Risks** contains advice on 'what if' situations on excursions.