



Last updated: 31st March 2015 Tim Shoben

**ISLINGTON
CENTRE for
ENGLISH**

Islington Centre for English (ICE) - Child Protection Policy

ICE is committed to protecting children from harm.

This includes:

- a) **SAFEGUARDING.** This is the school's duty of care to look after children and help them to achieve their potential
- b) **CHILD PROTECTION.** This involves protection from abuse.

Abuse can include neglect, sexual, physical, or psychological & emotional abuse.

The British Council defines a child as a person under the age of 18 and we will use this age for the purposes of this document and the creation of our Welfare & Safeguarding policies & procedures.

Staff in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which cause children and young people harm. We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, and staff.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Following stringent procedures for recruitment and selection of staff including mandatory DBS checks for staff and homestay providers.
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support and training.
- We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Welfare Officer

ICE has a designated Welfare Officer. The identity of the Welfare Officer is made known to the students on arrival and he/she will meet with all under-18s within the first couple of days. If any student or staff member has any concerns about the welfare of an under-18 this should be reported to the Welfare Officer.

Code of Behaviour

Statement of Intent. It is the policy of ICE to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of our programmes.

Staff should at all times show respect and understanding for the individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves appropriately.

Guidelines for all ICE Staff

Attitudes. Staff should be committed to:

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying.
- Valuing each child and young person.
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make.
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person.

Staff should endeavour to:

- Provide an example which we would wish others to follow.
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person, child or an adult working with young people.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.

One-to-one contact

Staff should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.

- In the event of having to meet with an individual child or young person, make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts. For these meetings there should be two members of staff, one male and one female, present. Staff are strongly advised against meeting a child alone in a closed space, especially of the opposite sex.

Physical contact

Staff should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves.
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

Electronic contact with students under 18

This is defined as the communication or publication of information (including images) between two or more people using an electronic device. This may occur using (but is not limited to) landline and mobile phones, other handheld electronic devices, gaming equipment and computers. Electronic contact may include but is not limited to voice communication, text communication, instant messaging, email, social networking sites, blogs, photos and videos.

This policy applies to the relationship between students and staff before, during or after a course. Staff must request permission from the employer for any electronic contact with a student under 18 years old, which is of a non-professional nature before, during or after a course. This may be necessary when needing mobile phone numbers from students for an excursion but social-networking on Facebook etc is strictly prohibited.

In any electronic contact with students, staff must pay particular attention to use neutral, un-emotive language that will not be misconstrued. Staff must not exchange any information with a student that they would not be happy to share with the child's parent or carer.

General

Staff should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret their actions no matter how well intentioned.
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Never allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention
- Seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes.
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.

Anti-Bullying policy

ICE has a written policy on bullying for staff in its Staff & Student Handbooks. These are available in the staffroom and each classroom, respectively. This policy for students is also in each classroom.

Staff recruitment policy

To ensure that employees working for ICE are suitable for work with children, the following procedures will be followed:

All staff must submit a C.V. and a completed ICE application form. Proof of qualifications will be required, all gaps in CVs must be explained satisfactorily, and references will be followed up. The reference request will ask if the referee has any reason to believe that the employee is unsuitable for work with children. Staff will be required to affirm that there is no reason why they should not be employed in situations where they have responsibility for, or substantial access to, persons under 18.

Staff are asked to agree to an enhanced DBS check. This being the case, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the school, and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. Unless the nature of the position allows ICE to ask questions about a person's entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of

Offenders Act 1974. In some cases, the school may be able to proceed with an appointment on a provisional basis pending clearance being obtained. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working with ICE. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences. At the same time, if a DBS check subsequently reveals matters which materially affect the suitability of a person for employment with ICE, the school will discuss matters with the employee and reserves the right to withdraw any provisional offer of appointment or to terminate a contract under the Disciplinary Procedure for misrepresentation or failure to disclose material facts during the job application/interview process.

Further details of the ICE policy on Disciplinary and Grievance procedures are to be found in the Staff Handbook and Contract of Employment.

Sharing information regarding child protection

Good communication is essential in any organisation.

At ICE, every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns; they will be listened to and taken seriously. It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organization and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Children and young people

ICE will act to ensure that young students have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties. When sharing information, ICE personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing information.

Parents

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

We achieve this by having a full copy of this Child Protection Policy available for anyone to view.

Staff

As an organisation which works with children and young people, it is imperative that each member of the ICE staff is aware of their responsibilities under the Child Protection legislation and has a working knowledge of ICE procedures. Each member of staff will receive training at induction.

Other Bodies

A copy of our Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.

What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse is a term to describe a range of ways in which people harm children. Often the person is known and trusted by the child. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. Child abuse is defined as, neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death. (NSPCC 1999)

Awareness of actual or likely abuse

Cases of abuse become apparent in a number of ways:

- A child may tell someone they are being abused.
- Someone may disclose that a child has told them, or they believe a child is or has been abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury with no satisfactory explanation for its cause.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely he / she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or way he / she relates to a child causes concern.

Signs of neglect or abuse

Eating disorders, being withdrawn, aggression, being disruptive, absence, self harm, change of conduct, homesickness, not wanting to return home, being inattentive, lack of hygiene, clinging to staff etc. are just some of the possible signs.

Procedure for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Responsibility of staff to report. It is the duty of ICE staff to disclose cases of abuse or allegations of abuse to the designated Welfare Officer without delay. It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true.

All suspicions or allegations of abuse must be taken seriously.

If a member of staff has suspicions, they should contact the designated Welfare Officer in confidence. If a child or young person starts to talk to the staff member directly, they should allow that person to disclose and should allow them to continue talking following the guidelines below. They should then see the designated Welfare Officer in confidence.

What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issue.
- Endeavour to meet the child in a semi- public or visible space if possible
- Listen to the child, rather than question him / her directly.
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption
- Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.

- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and who you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event,
- Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.

Record keeping

All records, information and confidential notes should be kept by the Child Protection Officer in separate files in a locked room or in secure electronic files. Only the Director and Director of Studies or will have access to these files.

The Records

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in ICE has concerns, a record should be made.

Details must include, as far as practicable:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home address (if known)
- Date of birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- What has prompted the concerns?
- Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or young person been spoken to?
- If so, what was said?
- Has any individual been identified in the allegation?
- If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? E.g. school Director, Accommodation & Welfare officer, Director of Studies, local social services, police etc.
- Has anyone else been consulted?
- If so, record details
- Record what action has been taken

Designated Child Protection Persons.

For reasons of confidentiality the only people who need to know this information are the Director & the Director of Studies, the Accommodation and Welfare officers. These will report to the Director.

Further Action: Once a statement has been collected from a student further questioning should be avoided apart from important clarification of factual detail.

A senior management representative (usually the Director) and the child protection officer will meet at the earliest possible opportunity to consider an appropriate course of action in response to the information revealed by the student and consider any other relevant information.

The Director will decide if it is appropriate to involve other members of the school staff, e.g. the Director of Studies, the Accommodation & Welfare officer at this stage, and also whether to inform the student's Educational Tour Operator and parents. There may be no need to take any further action in which case this decision should be recorded in writing.

The Director should always be briefed of developments and further action may include the immediate removal of any imminent threat of danger, seeking advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer, contacting the police, or making a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) depending on the severity of the allegation. Referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) A referral must be made to the ISA when ICE: withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with under-18s or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which does not involve contact with under-18s, because they think that the individual has:

- ...engaged in relevant conduct; i.e. action or inaction that has caused: neglect, emotional/psychological, sexual, or physical harm
- ...satisfied the Harm Test; to harm or cause harm, put a child at risk, attempt to harm or incite others to harm
- ...received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence. If these conditions have been met the information must be referred to the ISA.

The referral should be made to the ISA when the provider has gathered sufficient evidence as part of their investigations to support their reasons for withdrawing permission to engage in work with under-18s and in following good practice, consulted with their Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Health and Social Care Trust Designated Officer if appropriate.