

Approval:	Headmaster	Audience:	All stakeholders
Author:	Deputy Head of School	Review Frequency:	1 year
Approval date:	May 2025	Next Review:	November 2026
Version	2 (November 2025)		
Linked Policies:		Behaviour policy, Bullying policy, Acceptable use of IT policy, Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment, Managing Allegations Against Staff	

Heathfield International School Safeguarding Policy

1. Rationale

1.1 At Heathfield International School, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and members of our school community. Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. At the core of our responsibilities is ensuring the welfare and protection of children from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

1.2 This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and child protection, ensuring that all members of the school community understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. It aligns with international best practices, local legal requirements, and the school's commitment to the well-being of every student.

1.3 By implementing clear procedures, regular staff training, and a culture of vigilance, we strive to create an environment where children feel secure, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

2. Background

2.1 Heathfield International School recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students in its care. As an international school, we serve a diverse student body from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, requiring a comprehensive approach to child protection.

2.2 This policy aligns with international safeguarding standards, Thai child protection laws, and best practices in education. It applies to all staff, volunteers, and external partners working with our students. This policy is based on the Department of Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, *'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)'* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and conforms to the Thai Child Protection Act, B.E. 2546 (amended March 2025).

2.3 Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, requiring collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community. Our approach emphasises prevention, early intervention, and clear reporting procedures to ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.

2.4 Through ongoing training, awareness programs, and robust safeguarding measures, we aim to foster a culture where children feel safe, valued, and supported at all times.

3. Aims

3.1 This policy ensures that all staff can follow the necessary procedures in child protection cases by:

1. Raising awareness of abuse and clarifying responsibility for reporting potential cases.
2. Ensuring effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
3. Informing all stakeholders of the correct procedures in child protection matters.

4. Equality Statement

4.1 Some students have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. HISB is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises student's diverse circumstances. At Heathfield, we ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

4.2 We give special consideration to students who:

- have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- have limited English ability
- are known to be living in difficult situations where there are issues such as domestic violence or substance abuse
- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions

5. Definition of Child Abuse

5.1 Child abuse refers to any action or failure to act that results in harm, potential harm, or the risk of harm to a child. It includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and affluent neglect. Abuse can occur in person or online, within or outside the school environment.

5.2 All staff members are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Staff have a duty to recognise and report any signs of abuse to ensure the safety and well-being of every student.

5.3 Staff should be concerned if a student:

- Has injuries that are not typical of normal childhood activities.
- Regularly has unexplained significant injuries.

- Frequently has injuries, even when given reasonable explanations.
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behavior, performance, or attitude, including neglecting personal hygiene and appearance.
- Engages in unusually explicit and/or age-inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Discloses an experience in which they may have been harmed, whether verbal, written, or drawn.
- Uses social media inappropriately for their age or brings themselves into disrepute.

6. Dealing with Disclosures

6.1 If a student discloses that they have been harmed in any way, the staff member should:

1. Stay Calm and Listen – Provide a safe and supportive environment, allowing the student to speak freely without interruption or judgment.
2. Take the Disclosure Seriously – Believe the student and acknowledge their feelings. Do not dismiss or downplay their concerns.
3. Do Not Promise Confidentiality – Explain that the information will need to be shared with a DSL to ensure their safety.
4. Ask Open-Ended Questions – If clarification is needed, use open-ended questions (e.g., “Can you tell me more about that?”) but avoid leading or suggestive questioning.
5. Reassure the Student – Let them know they have done the right thing by speaking up and that they will be supported.
6. Record the Disclosure Accurately – Write down what was said as soon as possible, using the child’s exact words. Include the date, time, and details of the disclosure. Log the incident on CPOMS, which will alert the necessary staff.
7. Report Immediately – Inform the DSL or school leadership without delay, following the school’s safeguarding procedures.
8. Maintain Confidentiality – Only share the information with those directly involved in safeguarding the student. Staff should always consider the purpose of the disclosure and remind recipients that the information is confidential and only to be used for the stated purpose.

7. Procedures

7.1 When a safeguarding concern is reported, the following steps must be followed to ensure confidentiality and a timely response:

1. To ensure data protection, the staff member logs the incident on CPOMS, alerting the DSL and the safeguarding team. If CPOMS is unavailable, a paper form should be completed and handed to the DSL immediately.
2. The DSL gathers initial information, which may involve:
 - Interviewing staff members and documenting relevant details.
 - Reviewing the student’s school history on CPOMS.
3. If necessary, the DSL may request the reporting teacher to have further discussions with the student, especially in gender-specific or culturally sensitive cases.

4. The DSLs form a school-based response team, which may include the nurse, teacher, and other individuals as deemed appropriate.
5. Follow-up actions include:
 - Maintaining contact with the child and family for support and guidance.
 - Providing teachers with strategies for supporting the child in school.
 - Liaising with external therapists as necessary to ensure ongoing support.

7.2 Safeguarding Lead Team

The safeguarding team consists of eight members:

- Mrs. Hodges – DSL (EY and Primary)
- Ms Drinkel - DDSL (EY)
- Ms Ryley - DDSL (Primary)
- Mr Pattison - DSL (Secondary)
- Mr Mcaloran - DDSL (Secondary)
- Miss Nok – Thai Safeguarding Advisor and Translator
- Mr. Sony - Safeguarding Advisor and Counsellor
- Mr Pine - Advisor

7.3 Escalation Process:

1. Staff report concerns via CPOMS (or a paper form if CPOMS is unavailable).
2. The DSL reviews and investigates the case.
3. If needed, a response team is formed to assess and manage the situation.
4. Serious concerns are escalated to external child protection agencies if required.
5. Support continues through monitoring and liaison with families and external professionals.

8. Training

8.1 All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation and neglect.

8.2 This training will be regularly updated and will be integrated and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.

8.3 Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety as required but at least annually (for example, through emails and staff meetings).

9. Allegations Against Staff (see *Policy for Managing Allegations Against Staff*)

9.1 If a staff member wishes to make an allegation against another staff member, they must report it immediately to the Headmaster. If the Headmaster is absent, the report should go to the Deputy Headmaster.

9.2 If the allegation is against the Headmaster, the matter must be reported directly to the school owner, bypassing the Deputy Headmaster.

10. Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse

10.1 We recognise that students are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for students.

10.2 Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where behaviour:

- is serious and potentially a criminal offence
- could put students in the school at risk
- is violent
- involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or the sharing of inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

10.3 If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student it must be recorded and the DSL informed. The DSL may need to contact the police if the incident is a criminal offence.

10.4 A DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved with a named person they can talk to if needed.

10.5 We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents. To achieve this we will:

- challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders - for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing and initiation or hazing type violence
- ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- ensure students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- ensure staff reassure victims they are being taken seriously

10.6 If a member of staff is made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, including pseudo-images which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), it must be reported to the DSL immediately. Staff must **not** view, copy, print, share or save the imagery or ask a student to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL).

11. Data protection and privacy

11.1 All information shall be treated confidentially as far as reasonably practicable. There may be circumstances where, because of the nature of the investigation or disclosure, it will be necessary to disclose the reporter's identity. In such circumstances, every effort will be made to inform the reporter before such disclosure is made.

11.2 If it is necessary for the reporter to be involved in an investigation (for example by providing evidence), the fact that the reporter made the original disclosure will, so far as reasonably practicable, be kept confidential and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the reporter from any victimisation or detriment as a result of having made the disclosure.

11.3 All reports of suspected or disclosed abuse and any actions taken by the school are securely digitally archived, regardless of the conclusion reached.

12. Online safety and use of mobile technology (see *HISB Policy on Acceptable use of IT*)

12.1 We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. To address this the school aims to:

- have processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of students and staff
- protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology
- set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices for the whole school community
- establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incidents.

12.2 HISB recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning and in helping to protect and safeguard students. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose students to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes' where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

12.3 HISB will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully students in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

12.4 Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school.

12.5 Staff must upload any photos taken on personal devices to the shared drive on the same day and ensure the images are deleted from their personal device immediately afterward.

13. Recruitment (see *HISB Policy on 'Safer Recruitment'*)

13.1 At all times the Headmaster will ensure safe recruitment practices are followed. The Headmaster will appoint a recruitment panel for each period of recruitment. At least one person on the panel must have completed a safer recruitment in education course at least every two years.

13.2 At HISB we require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on references before offering a position at the school. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, we will undertake necessary Enhanced Disclosure and Police Checks and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children. We will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates.

13.3 All new staff will follow a rigorous probationary period whereby their competencies and suitability for HISB will be assessed. At the end of the probationary period, a report will be prepared to recommend whether or not they continue their employment at HISB.

14. Whistleblowing (refer to *HISB Policy on Whistleblowing*)

14.1 It is important that all cases of suspected wrongdoing are reported and managed in a timely and appropriate manner.

14.2 Whoever we may deal with, and wherever we may operate, HISB is committed to doing so lawfully, ethically and with integrity. It is the responsibility of each and everyone of us to ensure that we fulfil this commitment in our day to day working lives. However, from time to time there may be situations where the right course of action is unclear, or there may be situations where it is suspected or is known that something is improper, unethical or inappropriate. HISB has a legal and moral duty to take appropriate measures to identify such situations and attempt to remedy them.

14.3 It is sometimes difficult to know whether to speak up about something that concerns us. Often, people are reluctant to get involved, but this could result in serious consequences for HISB and its staff. It is important that a student or member of staff can talk to someone confidentially and to feel supported.

14.4 HISB aims to ensure that:

- Members of staff feel supported in speaking in confidence and reporting matters they suspect may involve anything improper, unethical or inappropriate;
- All improper, unethical or inappropriate behaviour be identified and challenged at all levels of the organisation;
- There are clear procedures for the reporting of such matters;
- All disclosures are managed in a timely, consistent and professional manner; and
- Provide assurance that all disclosures will be taken seriously, treated as confidential and managed without fear of retaliation.

15. Law and Guidance within Thailand

15.1 In accordance with the amendment to Section 1567 (2) of the Civil Code, published on March 24 2025 "Disciplining or behaviour correction of a child must not involve violence, physical or psychological harm, or any inappropriate actions".

16. Monitoring & Review

16.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Headmaster.

16.2 The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

APPENDIX 1: FORMS OF ABUSE

CATEGORIES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

This is actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Signs and Symptoms:

- Unexplained injuries or burns (particularly if they are recurrent).
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Fear of returning home.
- Fear of medical help.
- Aggression towards others.
- Self-destructive tendencies.

CATEGORIES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

This is failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs leading to a severe effect upon the behaviour and development of the child. This includes conveying to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved. Signs and Symptoms:

- Physical/mental/emotional developmental lags.
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Fear of new situations.
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g, rocking, thumb sucking etc).
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Self-harm.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL ABUSE:

A child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person or persons, by design or neglect, exploit the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other persons – including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language or behaviours.
- Loss of appetite or compulsive eating.

- Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking or needing previously discarded cuddly toys.
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated.
- Inability to focus.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Bed-wetting.
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures.
- Trying to be 'extra good'.
- Overreacting to criticism.
- Having outbursts of anger/irritability.
- Reluctance to get changed or undressed for PE or swimming.

NEGLECT

This refers to persistent or deliberate failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs; for example, a failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failure to protect a child or failure to provide adequate medical care. It may also involve neglect of, or failure to give adequate response to, a child's emotional needs. Signs and Symptoms:

- Constant hunger.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Constant tiredness.
- Poor state of clothing.
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Low self-esteem.
- Poor peer relationships.
- Stealing

AFFLUENT NEGLECT

(Affluent neglect is a specific type of neglect that occurs in wealthy families. In these cases, children may have material wealth but experience emotional neglect, lack of parental involvement, or pressure to succeed without sufficient emotional support.)

Rebellion or risk-taking behavior

Overachievement or workaholism

Difficulty forming healthy relationships

Lack of basic life skills (including a delay in reaching milestones e.g. independence in EY)

Feelings of loneliness and isolation

High levels of anxiety or depression

Low self-esteem Emotional numbness or detachment

Minimal parental involvement

Excessive material gifts as substitutes for love

Nannies, tutors, or drivers may be seen as the main caregiver.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- Rejecting – Communicating to a child through words and conduct that he or she is unwanted and/or worthless
- Ignoring – Withholding affection or showing little or no interest in a child.
- Threatening – Using threats, cursing and yelling at children.
- Isolating – Prohibiting a child from engaging in appropriate activities with friends or keeping a child away from human contact.
- Corrupting – Exposing a child to drugs, alcohol, criminal behaviour or inappropriate sexual conduct
- Exploiting – Manipulating a child into a forced activity or responsibility without regard for the child's development

ONLINE ABUSE

- Cyberbullying, use of the internet to bully and intimidate.
- Cybercrime, use of computers in criminal activity
- Cybersex trafficking, the live streaming of coerced sexual acts and or rape
- Malware, software designed to harm a user's computer, including computer viruses
- Spamming, sending unwanted advertising
- Online hazing
- Extremism/radicalisation

Important to Remember:

Staff are not investigators.

Your role is to listen and respond,
and then document and report any
disclosure or suspicion of abuse
or neglect to the DSL, counsellor,
or Headmaster