

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



SECTION 1:

St. Gilgen International School recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children / students. We seek to establish a safe and nurturing environment free from discrimination or bullying.

This policy applies to the whole of St. Gilgen International School workforce including volunteers.

We recognise that because of their day-to-day contact with children, School staff are ideally placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

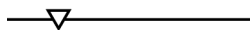
Staff will therefore:

- A. Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer – Adam Crew: Head of Boarding.
- B. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- C. Ensure that students know that they can approach any adult in School if they are worried and they will receive a consistent supportive response.
- D. Include in the curriculum, opportunities for students to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

St. Gilgen International School undertakes to:

1. Follow best practice procedures in all cases of abuse, or suspected abuse. Clarification on sources of current best practice can be obtained from the Child Protection Officer.
2. Ensure that we have a designated member of staff for child protection.
3. Ensure that the designated member of staff receives appropriate training and that this training is disseminated to all others in the school.
4. Ensure that all staff have training in child protection.
5. Ensure that all staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked for their suitability through safe recruitment procedures. To achieve this StGIS operates safe recruitment procedures at interview and when checking references and CVs to ensure the suitability of staff to work with students. Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers working with students including police background checks from the incoming country.
In any cases where StGIS ceases to use the services of any person due to them being considered unsuitable to work with children, the following agencies shall be contacted within one month of them leaving the school:

- The person's employer if not employed by the school
- The person's respective consulate if not an Austrian citizen
- Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft (kija) Salzburg for all Austrian citizens
- The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for any UK citizens



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6. Ensure that if staff employed by another organisation work with St. Gilgen International School students, written confirmation from the organisation is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply. See Trips Policy.
7. Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for being alert to, and acting appropriately in, cases of abuse or suspected abuse.
8. Ensure that the Senior Leadership Team of St. Gilgen International School, will undertake an annual review of the School's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged to ensure our School is aware of current best practice and will act to remedy any deficiencies in our policies without delay.
9. Establish and maintain links with relevant agencies in Austria and co- operate as required with enquiries of a child protection nature. See Section 6 for details.
10. Keep accurate written records of concerns on students even where referral is not appropriate immediately.
11. Ensure that all child protection records are kept secure and confidential and separate from the main student file.
12. Ensure that all staff understand that there is a procedure to be followed in dealing with allegations made against teaching and non-teaching staff. See Annex 1 to this policy.
13. In cases where a member of boarding staff is suspended pending investigation of a child protection nature, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from students.
14. In cases where a student(s) abuses another student, such that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, 'significant harm', this may be referred to the relevant agencies as a child protection concern.

As part of their induction training all new members of staff at St. Gilgen International School receive child protection training. This includes explanation of this policy.

SECTION 2: THE KEY POINTS TO FOLLOW IF YOU SUSPECT OR ARE TOLD OF ABUSE

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2011) that adults looking after children (those under the age of 18) in St. Gilgen International School should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults or other young people), and take steps to reduce those risks. They should know what to do if they suspect that someone is being physically or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this happening. This includes physical and sexual abuse that is occurring in School, or to a student of StGIS at home or outside the School.

The following key points give a guide on what to do and not to do:

1. Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.



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2. If you can, write brief notes of what you are told, right after the conversation (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) – and keep your original notes, however rough and even if you wrote on the back of something else (it's what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards!).
3. Do not give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it (see below). If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know.
4. Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "did he do X to you?") – just ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?"
5. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc – social services and police staff are the people trained to do this – you could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.
6. Immediately tell the designated Child Protection Officer – the Head of Boarding, unless he/she is accused or suspected of abusing. Don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told. In case of unavailability of the Head of Boarding, tell the Head of School.
7. Discuss with the Child Protection Officer whether any steps need to be taken to protect who has told you about the abuse. This may need to be discussed with the person who told you.
8. As soon as possible (and certainly within 24 hours) the Child Protection Officer will refer the matter to the relevant agencies. The referral will be made in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral and the contact name taken. They will set up any necessary investigations and will advise about correct procedures.
9. If someone has made an allegation about the Child Protection Officer you should immediately contact the Head of School.
10. Never think abuse is impossible in your school or group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
11. Staff are required to report to the Child Protection Officer any concern or allegation about School practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at the risk of abuse or other serious harm. No disciplinary action will be taken against such staff who make such reports in good faith.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND THE SIGNS OF ABUSE

(from Safeguarding Children in Education 2010)

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.



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They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that may indicate sexual abuse:

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self harm, self mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Bed wetting / incontinence
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for gym activities
- Sexually Transmitted Disease
- Fire setting

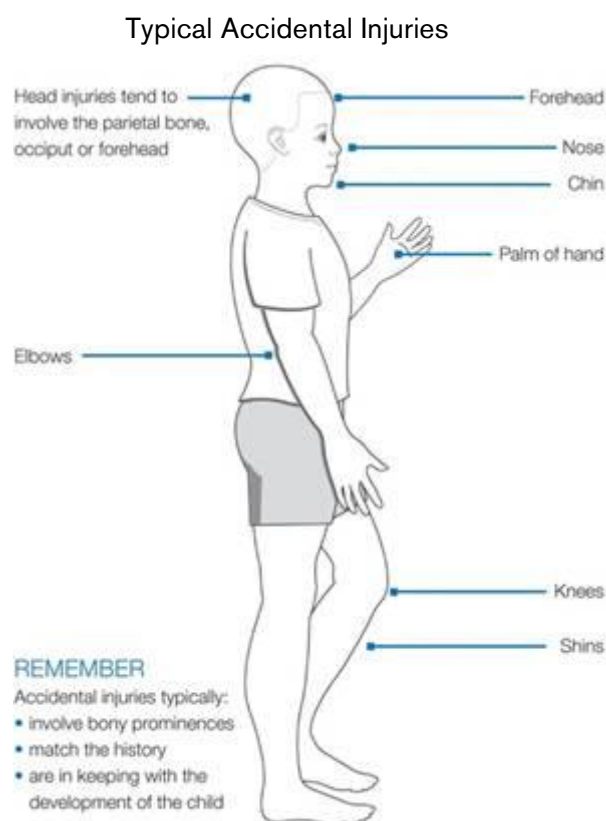
It is also important to note that there may be no signs.

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Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

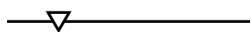


Neglect

Neglect is the **persistent failure** to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



Signs that may indicate neglect

- Excessive hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Frequent tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight (the same applies to weight gain, or being excessively overweight)
- Low self esteem
- Poor dental hygiene.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the **persistent** emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs that may indicate emotional abuse

- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self confidence / esteem



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- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harming
- Extremes of passivity and /or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play

Excessive need for approval, attention and affection.

SECTION 4: STAFF PROTECTION

A special feature of St. Gilgen International School (StGIS) is its relaxed and positive atmosphere. House staff and teachers fulfil many roles, not least that of temporary parent (in loco parentis). Given the risk, however slight, of students' confusion about their roles leading to imagined offences, staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place themselves or students (i) at risk of harm or (ii) of allegations of harm to a student or inappropriate behaviour with a student.

While we should be friendly with our students, we are not and cannot be their friends. It is more often students who will seek friendship from staff and this must be gently and sensitively discouraged. Staff members should let their line manager know of any inappropriate contacts from students e.g. letters, emails, social networking contacts, cards, presents etc. It is essential that staff maintain a suitable professional distance from students.

All communication with students must be professional. Remember that any email you write can be forwarded and any picture in which you feature could be circulated widely. Staff are not permitted to accept friendship requests from current students on social networking sites such as Facebook. If staff do accept friendship request from past students, be aware of your privacy and security settings, so that no information that might bring the School into disrepute can be accessed.

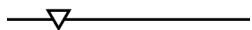
Private one-to-one meetings with students in your own home or at social events outside the School are prohibited. Obviously this does not apply to house staff talking to students in their houses or to teachers talking to students in the non-residential areas of the School, though it would be prudent to have another person present even in a public area if the matter under discussion is serious or very delicate.

If any student discloses sensitive information then the staff member must discuss this with the students' Mentor Tutor. Confidentiality cannot be offered.

Students' bedrooms are private areas and only residential, cleaning and maintenance staff, as well as Senior Leadership (or those given express permission by a member of the SLT) can access those areas in connection with the fulfilment of their duties.

If you have a serious disagreement with a student, make a brief written record of it and pass this to your line manager. This will offer some protection should a malicious complaint be made against you.

Staff in charge of activities or facilities where safety regulations and precautions are required must make sure that these are clearly published and should draw students' attention to them from time to time. Any accidents or unusual incidents should always be recorded on the School's accident/incident form.



SECTION 5: DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

This policy is about managing allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It is drawn from and is consistent with UK Department for Education guidance issued in July 2011: Dealing With Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff.

The policy should be used where it is alleged that a member of staff 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
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff must be dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently so that effective protection is provided for the child and support for the person who is the subject of the allegation.

1. Allegation made to school and Initial consideration

The allegation should be reported immediately to the Head of School. The Head of School will consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. If the allegation is not clearly false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Head of School will refer the matter to the relevant local authorities and/or police.

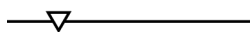
2. Action following initial consideration

Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the School to deal with it. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Head of School should institute appropriate action. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held in accordance with St. Gilgen International School disciplinary policy.

If a criminal investigation is required: (i) if the police decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should wherever possible aim to pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the school within three working days of the decision, (ii) if the person is convicted of an offence the police should also inform the employer straight away so that appropriate action can be taken.

The following timescales should apply:

- Unfounded or malicious allegation – should be resolved within 1 week
- No criminal offence; employer to deal with; concerns about child protection
 - No formal disciplinary action – the Head of School institutes action within 3 working days
 - Disciplinary hearing required, but no further investigation – hearing within 15 working days.



3. Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations.

Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. Suspension should only be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Alternative arrangements such as redeployment should be considered. The final decision regarding suspension rests with the Head of School.

4. Resignations and Compromise Agreements

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible, the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it, but the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available, should continue even if that cannot be done or the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

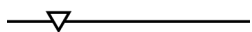
So called "compromise agreements" by which a person agrees to resign and a school agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, must not be used in these cases.

5. Record Keeping

It is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on. It will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record should be retained at least until the person has retired or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

6. Action in respect of False Allegations

If an allegation is determined to be false or malicious, the Head of School should refer the matter to the relevant agencies to determine whether the child concerned is in need of help, or may have been abused by someone else. In the event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Head of School should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the student who made it, or the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible if s/he was not a student. Cases in which an allegation(s) was proven to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious should not be included in employer references.



7. Supporting those involved

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it, unless it would compromise the safety of the child. They should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. Please note that the deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, relevant agencies, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

The person who is the subject of the allegations should be kept informed of the progress of the case and consideration must be given to what other support is appropriate for the individual. If the person is suspended, the individual should be kept informed about developments at school.

8. Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

9. Further Guidance

The framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children is set out in 'Working together to safeguard children: *a Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*' (March 2010).

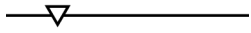
SECTION 6: EXTERNAL AGENCIES

A. OMBUDSOFFICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOR SALZBURG

The Ombudsoffice for Children and Youth for Salzburg is the closest organisation we have in Austria to a local safeguarding agency. In cases of a disclosure, suspected abuse or allegations against staff this organisation is our local point of contact. Their mission statement is as follows:

It is the task of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Youth to represent the rights and interests of minors and their families. In this function the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Youth shall in particular:

- a) give advice and support minors, parents, legal guardians and legal representatives in all matters related to the situation of the minor and the functions of the parents or legal guardians;
- b) assist and advise in case of disagreement and disputes regarding the care and education of minors between the children and adolescents concerned and parents, legal guardians as well as public and private youth welfare institutions;
- (c) file complaints with courts, administrative agencies, and other institutions in the interest of minors;
- (d) represent youth welfare concerns in public;
- (e) promote the cooperation of youth welfare institutions;
- (f) collaborate with the Youth Welfare Board;
- (g) collaborate in reviewing pertinent bills and draft regulations.



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Their contact details are:

kija@salzburg.gv.at

www.kija-sbg.at

B. LOCAL POLICE

The emergency number for making contact with the police in cases of serious harm is 133 and for the local police station - 059 133 – 5127.