



香港道爾頓學校
DSHK

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Section	Section E – Well-being		
Policy Number	EO1		
Applicability	International Stream		
Policy Lead	Child Protection Officer		
Review Body	School Leadership Team		
Last Reviewed	June 2025	Next Review	July 2026
Published to	Policy Library		

Review Status

Review No.	Summary of revision following review	Reviewed		Approved	
		By	Date	By	Date
1	Added "Child-on-child abuse" in Section 2 and names of the Safeguarding Team in Section 3	Carmen Von Cannon	27/6/2025	Shaun Porter	31/07/2025

1. Introduction

Dalton School Hong Kong (DSHK) is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We believe that every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and heard, as a secure and supportive environment is essential for their learning and development.

All members of the DSHK community—including teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and volunteers—must actively uphold this commitment.

The DSHK Board of Directors and School Leadership Team recognize that child well-being is a fundamental priority in all school activities. The school will use best endeavours to implement this policy effectively, and all staff members have a strict obligation to report any child protection concerns promptly. DSHK will take every reasonable step to comply fully with safeguarding standards and guidelines.

This policy unifies all stakeholders in a commitment to child safety and outlines proactive and ongoing education, training, and clear protocols for addressing suspected abuse or neglect.

2. Definitions

- **Child Abuse:** Defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power." In Hong Kong, child abuse is "any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs the physical or psychological health and development of an individual under 18."
- **Child Protection:** Policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures aimed at protecting children from harm, including addressing self-harm that indicates abuse.
- **Child Protection Concern:** Any reported, self-revealed, or suspected instance of child abuse, whether it occurs within or outside the school community, requiring prompt investigation and action.

- **Types of Abuse:**

- o **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental harm, such as hitting or shaking. Indicators include unexplained injuries.

- o **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent ill-treatment affecting emotional development, such as conveying worthlessness. Indicators include social withdrawal or depression.

- o **Sexual Abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities. Indicators include inappropriate sexual behavior or trauma to private parts.

- o **Neglect:** Failing to provide basic needs, putting the child's well-being at risk. Indicators include poor hygiene or frequent absences.

- o **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental harm, such as hitting or shaking. Indicators include unexplained injuries.
- o **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent ill-treatment affecting emotional development, such as conveying worthlessness. Indicators include social withdrawal or depression.
- o **Sexual Abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities. Indicators include inappropriate sexual behavior or trauma to private parts.
- o **Neglect:** Failing to provide basic needs, putting the child's well-being at risk. Indicators include poor hygiene or frequent absences.
- **Child-on-child abuse:** All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures regarding child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening. It may be the case that abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Examples of which are listed below. Downplaying certain behaviors, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviors, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
 - sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
 - sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
 - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
 - upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- **Bullying & Harassment:** A form of repeated emotional or physical abuse, involving an imbalance of power, including cyberbullying. DSHK will address and prevent all forms of bullying.

3. Adherence to Relevant Practices, Policies, and Laws

DSHK’s Child Protection Policy aligns with international best practices, Hong Kong regulations, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- **Article 19:** Mandates protection from maltreatment and social programs to prevent abuse.
- **Article 34:** Requires protection from sexual exploitation.

The Principal and Safeguarding Team oversee developing educational programs, training, policy frameworks, and case management to ensure child protection. The core Safeguarding Team includes:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Child Protection Officer (CPO)** – Carmen Von Cannon
- **Deputy Child Protection Officer**
- **Community Liaison Officer and LEAD Coordinator**
- **School Counseling Team**

4. Training and Education

The Principal and Safeguarding Team will implement a comprehensive child protection educational program, ensuring the community is aware of their responsibilities.

- **Mandatory Staff Training:** Annual training for all staff on abuse indicators and reporting procedures.
- **Student Education:** Age-appropriate child protection education integrated into the curriculum.
- **Parent Engagement:** Annual information sessions on DSHK’s Child Protection Policy and procedures.

5. Reporting Obligations

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must report suspicions of abuse or neglect to the Safeguarding Team or Principal within 24 hours. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action. Reports should be made verbally, followed by written documentation.

Reporting Procedure:

1. **Employee Involvement:** If the alleged perpetrator is a DSHK employee, report to the Principal, who will initiate disciplinary measures and engage the Safeguarding Team.
2. **No Employee Involvement:** Report to the Safeguarding Team, which will complete an incident report and inform the Principal.

Please see Section 9 for Detail Reporting Procedures

6. Investigations and Response

The Safeguarding Team will convene and assess reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Appropriate actions may include:

- **Monitoring:** Continued observation if concerns are unsubstantiated.
- **Parent Involvement:** Meeting with parents if the child's well-being is impacted but not in immediate danger.
- **Referral to Authorities:** Contacting the Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) for substantiated concerns.
- **Immediate Action:** Reporting to the local police's Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) for cases of serious abuse.

All actions will be documented in the Child Protection Incident Report and kept in a confidential file.

Parents or guardians, by enrolling their child at DSHK, agree to cooperate with any investigation deemed necessary by the school. However, DSHK assumes no liability for the outcomes of external investigations or legal proceedings.

7. Confidentiality

DSHK is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all reports of child protection concerns. However, confidentiality may be overridden by legal or ethical obligations to protect a child from harm. In such cases, DSHK will disclose only the necessary information to the appropriate authorities, and will make every effort to respect the privacy of all parties involved.

8. Vetting of Prospective Staff

All staff, both employed and volunteer, will be subject to vetting procedures as outlined by the Council of International Schools. The Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC) will be conducted through the Hong Kong Police, and any failure to disclose criminal convictions related to child abuse will result in dismissal.

9. Detail Reporting Procedures

Child Protection Incident Reporting



Family and Child Protective Service Unit (FCPSU)

Step 1: Disclosure of Reasonable Cause for Concern

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect is occurring, the faculty or staff member must immediately follow the appropriate reporting pathway.

- **If the alleged perpetrator is an employee**, the faculty or staff member must report the concern directly to the Principal. The Principal will follow the DSHK Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and initiate appropriate disciplinary procedures. The Principal will also engage the Safeguarding Team to ensure student support as needed.
- **If no employee is involved**, the faculty or staff member must report the concern to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after becoming aware of the incident. The Safeguarding Team will gather information, complete the Child Protection Incident Report, and inform the Principal.

Step 2: Case Conference with the Safeguarding Team

Once a concern is reported, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will take initial steps to gather information and assess the situation. Within 24 hours, the CPO will inform the Safeguarding Team and the Principal, and a case conference will be called to discuss the disclosure, facts, and available information.

During the case conference, the Safeguarding Team will evaluate the situation, including whether further information gathering (such as interviews) is necessary and what course of action should be taken. All incident details and subsequent actions will be documented in the Child Protection Incident Report, which will be stored in the Confidential Child Protection File, separate from the student's official records.

Step 3: Course of Action & Referral Procedures

The follow-up action will be determined based on the severity of the situation, the nature of the abuse or neglect, and the safety of the student. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout. There are four possible follow-up options:

- **Option 1: Monitor**

If the initial reports do not substantiate serious concerns, the Safeguarding Team will continue to monitor the student and provide counseling support. The course of action and monitoring plan will be documented in the Child Protection Incident Report.

- **Option 2: Parent Involvement**

If the concerns impact the student's well-being but do not present an immediate risk of harm, the Safeguarding Team will involve the parents. A meeting will be held within 24 hours to share the concerns, outline action steps for support, and provide referrals if necessary. The course of action and monitoring plan will be documented.

- **Option 3: Referral to FCPSU**
If there is a clear allegation of abuse or neglect, but the student is not in immediate danger, the Safeguarding Team will refer the case to the Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU). A meeting will be held with the parents to inform them of the referral and to outline a support plan. The referral and follow-up actions will be documented in the Child Protection Incident Report.
- **Option 4: Call Local Police (CAIU) and Referral to FCPSU**
In cases of serious physical or sexual abuse, or where the student is in immediate danger, the Principal will report the case to the local police's Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) and make a referral to FCPSU. The Safeguarding Team will ensure the student's safety until the authorities establish a care plan and notify the parents. All actions will be documented in the Child Protection Incident Report.

In severe cases where external authorities are involved, additional actions may include consulting with local authorities, the consulate of the involved family's country, or legal counsel.

Step 4: Follow-Up Procedures Following a reported or substantiated case of abuse or neglect:

- The school counselor will maintain contact with the reporting staff member, the child, and the family to provide support as needed.
- The school counselor will offer resources and strategies to the child's teachers and keep the Principal informed of the child's progress.
- The school counselor will maintain communication with external professionals and organizations to ensure the ongoing well-being of the child.

10. Documentation, Reporting Information, and Confidentiality

Child Protection Incident Reporting

Social Work Officer (FCPSU for Central, Western, and Southern District): 2835 2733

SWD Departmental Hotline: 2343 2255

Police Station (Wan Chai): 3661 1612

Reporting

When reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect, the following information should be provided:

1. The immediate cause for concern and any immediate danger to the child.

2. The child's full name, date of birth, home address, I.D. number, and any special needs.
3. The child's current whereabouts.
4. The names and HKID numbers of the child's parents or carers, and details of other household members.
5. The name of the family doctor.
6. The name of the school and the reporting contact person.
7. The names of other witnesses or agencies involved.
8. Any other relevant information.

Documentation and Information Sharing

All documentation related to the investigation will be kept in the child's confidential file, separate from the student's official records. DSHK will ensure that relevant information is shared with any future schools to which the student transfers, as allowed by law, to protect the child.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential and must be maintained unless someone discloses that they or someone else is in immediate danger. In such cases, DSHK employees are obligated to take the necessary steps to seek help in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.

11. Building a Culture of Awareness

Student Awareness The Safeguarding Team will lead a community-wide initiative to provide age-appropriate child protection education. The team will collaborate with classroom teachers to deliver this curriculum throughout the school year.

DSHK Employee and Volunteer Awareness

The Child Protection Officer will conduct an annual briefing for faculty, staff, and volunteers at the beginning of each academic year. All employees and volunteers must review and sign the Safeguarding Agreement, confirming their understanding of DSHK's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

DSHK Parent Awareness

The school will hold an annual information session for parents to explain DSHK's Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures. Parents will receive the updated policy at the start of each school year.

12. Administrative Regulations for Employee-Related Cases

Discovery and Reporting

DSHK is committed to fostering a safe and open environment, encouraging individuals to report suspected abuse without fear.

All employees are required to report any suspected abuse they observe or reasonably suspect to the Principal or their direct supervisor (e.g., Head of Department). The Principal will maintain confidentiality but may need to disclose information to the accused, witnesses, or relevant external parties, such as police, government departments, legal advisors, or third-party investigators, as necessary or required by law. Any disclosure will be limited to essential information. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific, identifiable facts that an objective, similarly trained person would interpret similarly.

- Verbal reports should be made immediately, followed by a written report within 24 hours unless extraordinary circumstances apply.
- Employees making reports in good faith will not face penalties from the School.
- False accusations, if found deliberate, will result in disciplinary action, including expulsion (students) or termination (employees).

Investigation

The School will promptly investigate any accusation in consultation with the Board of Directors. The Principal will appoint an investigation lead, possibly including the Vice Principal, Department Head, or Director of Human Resources. Independent investigators or authorities may also be involved as needed. The investigation will be conducted swiftly and confidentially to establish whether reasonable grounds exist for the suspicion. Findings will be reported to the Principal.

Employees accused of abuse will be immediately removed from student contact and placed on paid administrative leave or reassigned, with restricted campus access, until the investigation concludes. These measures protect both the School and the employee during the process.