



## **Policy and Guidelines Relating to Child Protection at the British School of Amsterdam**

### **Policy**

The aim of this policy and guidelines is to protect and maintain the welfare of all pupils at the British School of Amsterdam and to adhere to national procedures relating to child protection. In so doing we also ensure that members of staff at the British School of Amsterdam are protected and supported in the administration and application of the Child Protection Policy. All information and communication within the area of Child Protection must be treated with strict confidentiality.

### **General principles**

1. On the basis of his or her knowledge and experience the professional bears a direct responsibility for the development, health and safety of the child (the minor) with whom he or she comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, in the course of his or her profession.
2. In a case where child abuse (or neglect/concern related to child protection), has been identified, the professional bears the responsibility that the overall aim of reporting is to ensure that the abuse etc. stops as quickly as possible.
3. The professional should be capable of identifying signs given by pupils and their environment as possible indications of child abuse. He or she is required to maintain his or her knowledge and expertise in this regard by means of independent study or further training and instruction.

### **Suspicion of abuse**

4. The professional who, in whatever form, has indications that a child is or may be the victim of abuse should take the necessary steps in order to ascertain whether or not child abuse is actually taking place.
5. The professional should make a written record (on blue child protection forms available in each staffroom) of all indications which have led him or her to the conclusion that a child is being abused or may be the victim of abuse.

### **Consultation**

6. The professional is required to discuss with the member of management responsible for Child Protection (at their site) any indications which may lead him or her to conclude that a child may be the victim of abuse.

The aims of this consultation are to establish:

- a. whether the signs observed are recognised by others;
- b. whether others have observed additional signs;
- c. whether the signs observed have also led others to suspect child abuse;
- d. which subsequent steps need to be taken;
- e. how to allocate duties and responsibilities with regard to the steps to be taken.

### **Following Consultation**

The member of SMT responsible for Child Protection who has been involved in the consulting procedure will make a written record of the consultation and subsequent action to be taken such as:

- Continued written observation
- Advice call to Advies en Meldpunt Kindermishandeling/**AMK** (0900 12312300) which is the designated organization to contact for advice on how to deal with a suspected case of child abuse.
- Contact with parents
- Immediate reporting to **ARCAN** (Advice and Reporting Centre for Child Abuse/Neglect)

At no point will a member of staff, who is not responsible for Child Protection, act independently.

Helen Rigelsford and Valerie Hagan – October 2008

### **Further investigation**

8. Where possible and based on the indications that a child is the victim of abuse, the professional, on the advice of the Child Protection Officer/SMT member, will talk to the child about the situation. The BSA bears in mind the following aspects of talking with children about child abuse or possible child abuse:

- a. the conditions for such a conversation;(for example who is present, where it takes place)
- b. the objectives; (what is to be achieved by talking to the child)
- c. the responsibilities in this regard within the organisation; (that the child knows that the information may have to be shared beyond the current situation)
- d. the way in which and the circumstances under which such conversations should take place

9. Where possible and based on the indications that a child is the victim of abuse, the professional and/or Child Protection Officer/SMT member will talk to the child's parents/guardians about the situation. The BSA bears in mind the following aspects of talking with parents/guardians about child abuse or possible child abuse:

- a. the conditions for such a conversation; ;(for example who is present, where it takes place)
- b. the objectives; ; (what is to be achieved by talking to the parents)
- c. the responsibilities in this regard within the organisation; (that the parents know that the school may have a duty to report)
- d. the way in which and the circumstances under which such conversations should take place.

The professional who knows or who has reason to suspect that a child is the victim of abuse can report the case to the Advice and Reporting Centre for Child Abuse and Neglect / ARCAN. The professional can also choose to remain anonymous with regard to the child and the family whom he or she reports to the ARCAN, but must provide reasons for wishing to do so. In principle, this possibility is not open to professionals who are engaged in helping the family in question to improve the upbringing of their child(ren).

### **Initiating help**

10. The professional or the Child Protection Officer/SMT member will call in ARCAN and, if necessary and in consultation with the ARCAN will call in other parties in cases where their own capability for taking adequate action are not sufficient. The BSA bears in mind the following aspects of calling in other parties:

- a. the conditions;
- b. the objectives;
- c. the responsibilities within and between the organization(s);
- d. which other parties can/should be called in;
- e. the way in which these parties should be called in.

11. In cases where the interests of the child so dictate, the professional will call in the ARCAN and, if necessary and in consultation with the ARCAN, will call in other parties without informing and/or obtaining the permission of the parents/guardians. The BSA bears in mind the following aspects of this process:

- a. the conditions;
- b. the objectives;
- c. the responsibilities for this process within the organisation;
- d. which other parties can/should be called in;
- e. the way in which these parties should be called in.

12. In the event of reporting, the professional will hand over to the AMK in writing all further relevant details which he or she is able to supply in his or her professional or working capacity.

### **Obligation to Report**

Any member of staff at the BSA who has reason to believe that another member of staff may be guilty of child abuse or may have been guilty of child abuse in the past is required to inform the management of this suspicion immediately.

The amended Youth Services Act (Wet of Jeugdhulpverlening) stipulates that professionals have an obligation to report child abuse committed by others who work in the same organization.

Upon receiving such a report, the management of the organization is obliged to inform the ARCAN immediately.

## **Guidelines**

The Process of reacting to child abuse or suspected child abuse at the BSA:

1. A disclosure of abuse by a student or a suspicion or observation of abuse (or neglect/ concern related to child protection), is made by a member of staff, parent or another student in the BSA community
2. The member of staff takes the necessary steps to ascertain whether or not child abuse is taking place, by talking to the student/s involved (or when appropriate, the parents/other staff members). The student is informed that the member of staff has a duty to report the allegation of child abuse. The member of staff is required to keep a full written record of all communications and action, detailing times, dates and persons involved, on the blue forms available in each staffroom.
3. The member of staff will report to a Child Protection Officer/SMT member at the relevant school site (Infant, Lower Junior, Upper Junior or Secondary) about the allegation of child abuse and will pass on the written information (blue form) to him/her. This reporting will also take the form of a consultation in order for the CPO/SMT member to gain full insight into the circumstances, and also to provide support and advice to the reporting member of staff. A full written record of this feedback and discussion will be made by the CPO/SMT member with details of time, date and persons involved.
4. The CPO/SMT member will, when deemed necessary, take the necessary steps to consult with the AMK or advise the reporting or another member of staff to do so. Following consultation they will make a decision in regards to the necessary steps to take
5. The CPO/SMT member will talk to the student/s involved, or advise the reporting or another member of staff to do so. Whoever does so is obliged to stress to the student that there is a responsibility to communicate the incident. A written record should be kept of this discussion
6. Where appropriate the CPO/ SMT member will talk to the student's parents/guardians , or advise the reporting or another member of staff to do so. A written record will be kept of this discussion
7. The CPO/SMT member will contact the relevant authorities, or advise the reporting or another member of staff to do so, in the case that a student's interests dictate this action (AMK or ARCAN). This may occur with/without the permission of the parents/guardians. All evidence/written reports in connection with the case will be passed over to the ARCAN.

8. The CPO/SMT member will provide any additional information required and will act as signatory when necessary

**For further detail please refer to the Child Protection Policy**

Valerie Hagan and Helen Rigelsford – October 2008