

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

(Updated August 2023)

## Vision

Inspiring kind and joyful learning communities who use innovative thinking to build a mindful and sustainable world.

## Mission

Verita ensures that kindness is the centre of everything we do. Deeply committed to international and intercultural understanding, Verita provides an academically engaging, inquiry-based educational approach.

Our responsibility is to whole-heartedly assist our students to develop the social-emotional and academic skills necessary to live meaningful, fulfilled and happy lives.

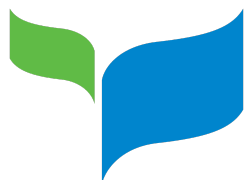
## Preamble

Verita International School is an institution which aligns with the CIS Code of Ethics and the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The CIS Code of Ethics highlights that we, as a school, are expected to:

- Fulfil the promises stated in their guiding statements, policies, contracts and promotional materials.
- Strive for excellence.
- Nurture a culture of care in which the education, safety and well-being of students and others are paramount.
- Comply with applicable laws and regulations.
- Respect the dignity and equality of all individuals, groups and cultures.
- Promote global citizenship.

As a school which aligns with the UNCRC, we make an effort on upholding the 45 articles of the convention in our school; please refer to the UNCRC articles [here](#).



## Contents

1. Introduction and context
  - 1.1. Our responsibilities
  - 1.2. Our Principles and aims
  - 1.3. Scope
  - 1.4. Our Policy
  - 1.5. Equality Statement
2. Types of abuse
  - 2.1. Children who may require early help
  - 2.2. Child Abuse
  - 2.3. Child Sexual Exploitation
  - 2.4. Female Genital Mutilation
  - 2.5. So-called Honour Based Violence
  - 2.6. Preventing Radicalisation
  - 2.7. Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and disabilities
  - 2.8. Child to Child abuse (formerly Peer to Peer)
  - 2.9. Managing children with sexually harmful behaviour
3. Safeguarding roles & responsibilities
  - 3.1 The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team at Verita International School
  - 3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for...
  - 3.3 All staff, volunteers and Board members have responsibility for...
  - 3.4 Board members and Verita School leadership team are responsible for
4. Safeguarding Processes and Procedures
  - 4.1. How to report concerns
  - 4.2. Taking action
  - 4.3. Student disclosure of abuse or radicalisation
  - 4.4. Suspecting that a student is at risk of harm
5. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers
6. Dealing with allegations against existing staff and volunteers who work with children
  - 6.1 Who to report concerns to about staff
7. Managing situations and exit arrangements
8. Training for all staff and students
9. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
  - 9.1. Anti-bullying
  - 9.2. E-safety
  - 9.3. Photography and Images
10. Confidentiality and sharing information
11. Management of the Policy
12. Forms are found on the staff drive under child protection:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EkHrbHhi-KaC5afGZFD0Lr04ZhN0QVBK/edit>



# 1. Introduction and Context

## **1.1 Our responsibilities**

Verita School is committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. This policy sets out how Verita School will deliver these responsibilities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping children safe in education' September 2023, which is the UK statutory guidance to be understood and followed by academies and colleges, and alongside 'Working together to safeguard children' (February 2023), a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

These documents are available via the following links:

- [KCSIE 2023 September](#)
- [WTTSC 2023 \(February\)](#)

Our Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are in accordance with the International Task force on Child Protection and confirm with the UN convention on the Rights of the Child to which Romania is a signatory and align with and support Romanian Law. \*

\*The relevant legislation is Romanian Law 272/2004 regarding child protection. (See appendix 1)

## **1.2 Our Principles**

*The emphasis on safeguarding requirements is now part of the Advisory Boards' responsibilities for ensuring staff's understanding and application of safeguarding within the school.*

We believe that Verita School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of the individual child.

We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children to feel safe and respected.

We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly about anything that worries them and to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

We will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.



Safeguarding arrangements in our school are underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff, board members and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children safe; and
- a child-centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

**All staff who speak English must read section one and Annex A of the [Keeping children Safe in Education document](#).**

**ALL English speaking staff are required to complete the Educare Safeguarding Level 1 and Child-on-child Abuse for International Schools course online and participate in all the staff trainings on safeguarding.**

**All Romanian only speakers are trained by the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has translated the procedures and a Romanian version of the different types of abuse.**

### **1.3 Scope**

In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years. This policy also applies to students over 18 that are still attending Verita school. In addition, it serves as a guideline for interactions with people under 26 who have left our school, but are still in contact for alumni events or any other school-related activities.

This policy applies to all members of staff in Verita School, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, board members, volunteers, contractors and external service or workshop activity providers.

### **1.4 Our Policy**

There are 6 main elements to our policy, which are described in the following sections:

- The types of abuse that are covered by the policy;
- The signs of abuse that staff and volunteers should look out for;
- Roles and responsibilities for safeguarding;
- Expectations of staff and volunteers with regard to safeguarding, and the procedures and processes that should be followed, include the support provided to children;
- How the school will ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately trained, and checked for their suitability to work within the academy;
- How the policy will be managed and have its delivery overseen.

Through implementation of this policy we will ensure that Verita School provides a safe environment for children to learn, develop and **promote each child's welfare.**

*This key paragraph has been added to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education':*

***"All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report."* (p8)**



## **1.4 Equality Pledge**

Research shows that some students are at greater risk of abuse and harm and some have additional barriers preventing them from recognising and disclosing that they have suffered.

We are committed to an anti-discriminatory approach which recognises and ensures children's diverse backgrounds and family are taken account of. We protect all students regardless of any barriers they may face.

These may include:

- Special consideration is applied to under 5s;
- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students;
- ELL students;
- Students who are carers for parents, grandparents or siblings in the home environment;
- May have been bullied, or have bullied others;
- Susceptible to racial, physical, ethnic, gender identification, sexuality or religious discrimination;
- Are known to live in homes where domestic violence or substance abuse has been reported previously;
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or radicalisation;
- Are fleeing war, or are asylum seekers;
- Are at risk due to their mental health issues or those of their parent/s;
- Are looked after/adopted;

The school offers additional support for children with SEN and disabilities commensurate with their individual needs. **See also section 2.7**

## **2.0 Types of Abuse**

### **2.1 Children who may require early help**

Staff and volunteers working within the school should be alert to the potential need for early help for children. Staff and volunteers should consider following the procedures identified for initiating early help (see section 5) for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence;



- has returned home to their family from care; and/or
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.

## **2.2 Child Abuse**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Keeping Children Safe in education' (Sept 22) as follows:

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, 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;

Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh;
- cigarette burns;
- human bite marks;
- broken bones;
- scalds, with upward splash marks;
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- flinching when approached or touched;
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- depression;
- withdrawn behaviour;
- running away from home.



## 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;

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- being unable to play;
- fear of making mistakes;
- sudden speech disorders;
- self-harm;
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour;
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

## 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 or 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 - sharing nudes or semi-nude images/video (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).

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

All staff and volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.



The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area;
- bruising or bleeding near genital area;
- sexually transmitted disease;
- vaginal discharge or infection;
- stomach pains;
- discomfort when walking or sitting down;
- pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn;
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- having nightmares;
- running away from home;
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level; sexual drawings or language;
- bedwetting;
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia;
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about;
- substance or drug abuse;
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

## **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.

It may include a failure 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 caregivers);
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
  - neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
- "Domestic abuse...can [be] psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn." (From p14 of KCSIE)
  - "Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others." (From p10 of KCSIE)





It can be difficult to recognize neglect; however, its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or 'smelly' ;
- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children;
- losing weight, or being constantly underweight;
- inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised; including affluent neglect (see appendix 3)
- not having many friends;
- complaining of being tired all the time;
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is also abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse.

Refer to Verita School's [Anti Bullying Policy](#), available for staff and for Parents/others on the website.

Other reportable forms of abuse which we are thoroughly committed to raising student's awareness of include:

### **2.3. Child Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Child Sexual Exploitation – Definition and Guide for Practitioners February 2017).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.



However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

([KCSIE 2023](#)).

The International Centre for Missing and exploited Children (IMCE) has an excellent website of detailed information and support for all schools. It helps to track and find children who disappear from schools across the world. Its website is <https://www.icmec.org>.

Key indicators of children being sexually exploited may include;

- going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- regularly missing academy or education or not taking part in education;
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Receiving unexplained gift or gifts from unknown sources
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having multiple phones
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Seen at strange meeting places (hotels or known places of concern)
- Having older boyfriends / girlfriends
- Self-harming / drug or alcohol misuse
- Injuries (physical)
- Normal procedures for reporting any concerns would apply for this too.

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

There are three main types of child sexual exploitation:

- Inappropriate relationships - Usually involves just one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser.
- Boyfriend - Abuser grooms victims by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafés or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims are required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help.
- Organised exploitation and trafficking - Victims are trafficked through criminal networks – often between towns and cities – and forced or coerced into sex with multiple men. They may also be used to recruit new victims. This serious organised activity can involve the buying and selling of young people.

## **2.4 Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs or non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in all EU countries including Romania.



FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-academy to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include

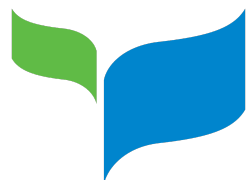
- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from academy or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

All EU member countries and those wishing to become full members such as Romania must adhere to the Istanbul Convention which treats FGM as a criminal offence.

Even though there is no specific legal requirement to do so in Romania currently, *it does apply under **article 306 of the penal code as "an act of severely endangering through measures or treatments of any type, the physical, intellectual or moral development of a minor by parents or any other person to whom the minor has been given to be raised and educated"**. We will report it as it is abuse against a child.* This will usually come from a disclosure. Under no circumstances should staff physically examine pupils. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, concerns about FGM should be taken to the DSL, rather than the police.

## **2.5 So-called 'Honour-based Violence'**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to



protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community including; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBV

are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBV, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

## **2.6 Preventing Radicalisation**

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

### Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside academy
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-Romanian views
- advocating violence towards others

Additional information states:

“Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Romania and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.” (published in KCSIE 2023, p. 33)



## **2.7 Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities**

Children and young people with SEN and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges as:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

We identify pupils who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by:

Identifying students who are "vulnerable" and maintaining this list as a database. Students at Verita School are identified as "vulnerable" where they have:

- SEND;
- Attendance concerns;
- Behavioural concerns;
- been Looked-after;
- Have previously been: on a Child Protection Plan, a Child in Need, in receipt of "Early Help" and/or were Looked-after;

The Designated Safeguarding Leads meet regularly with key pastoral staff to monitor and support these vulnerable students.

Students with an Educational, Health or Care Plan, or have a Statement of SEN, receive individual support, depending on their specific needs.

## **2.8 Child to child Abuse - including abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.**

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to; bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse. This could, for example, include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.

At Verita School, we believe that all children have a right to learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students/pupils.

We recognise that some students/pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their conduct and behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students/pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.



The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Concerns about child on child abuse are reported in the same way as all other forms of abuse. Tell the DSL and record the allegation on a safeguarding concern form. You do not investigate it.

- 1) DSL and their team will listen to all parties involved during school time and excuse students from classes when necessary;
- 2) The DSL team will establish an action plan after all facts and details have been established;
- 3) Parents of these involved will meet the DSL representatives;
- 4) Any relevant external agencies will be contacted if required (children social care, mental health services, sexual health services, police if a criminal offence has taken place);
- 5) DSL team will put in place a risk assessment and and support plan for all the students involved both victim and alleged perpetrator (a named person to talk to if needed can be added).

## 2.9 Managing children with sexually harmful behaviour

Managing students with sexually harmful behaviour is complex, the school will work with an appropriate counsellor to engage and support the student through their difficulties. These sessions, plus our pastoral SEE programme and curriculum of Relationships and Sex Education will support the students development. We will also engage with any relevant external agencies to ensure the safety of the whole school community is secured.

### **Cases of Sexting/Nude Sharing In cases of nude sharing / 'sexting' (youth produced sexual imagery)**

The guidance followed at Verita is that given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2021: 'Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people'. Sexting is one of a number of risk-taking behaviours associated with the use of digital devices, social media and the internet. It is accepted that young people experiment and challenge boundaries and therefore the risks associated with online activity can never be completely eliminated.

We recognise our duty of care to our young people who find themselves involved in such activity as well as its responsibility to report such behaviours where legal or safeguarding boundaries are crossed.

There are various definitions for nude sharing/'sexting' (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) but in this policy we will define it as:

- a person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18;
- a person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of



18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult;

- a person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

*(Please note the term 'imagery' includes, but is not limited to, photographs, videos, animations and other depictions. As these incidents can differ, we recognise the importance of responding to each case in a manner appropriate to the situation.)*

If a staff member becomes aware of a sexting incident:

- the incident should be referred to the DSL and as soon as possible.
- the DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff.
- there should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate).
- parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.

If there is any concern that the young person has been harmed or is potentially in a position to be harmed, a referral should be made to the local children's social welfare services, and/or the police immediately.

### 3.0 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team at Verita International School:

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<b>DSL School Counsellor</b>	<b>Ilinca Vlaicu</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ilince.vlaicu@verita.ro">ilince.vlaicu@verita.ro</a></b>
<b>Deputy DSL School Counsellor</b>	<b>Ana Abatacesei</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ana.abatacesei@verita.ro">ana.abatacesei@verita.ro</a></b>
<b>Deputy DSL Principal of Primary &amp; EY</b>	<b>April Wuest</b>	<b><a href="mailto:april.wuest@verita.ro">april.wuest@verita.ro</a></b>
<b>Deputy DSL Principal of Secondary</b>	<b>Ashley Peek</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ashley.peek@verita.ro">ashley.peek@verita.ro</a></b>



<b>Deputy DSL Assistant Principal of Primary &amp; EY</b>	<b>Julie Dinca</b>	<b>julie.dinca@verita.ro</b>
<b>Assistant Principal of Secondary</b>	<b>Irina Cazacu</b>	<b>irina.cazacu@verita.ro</b>

### **3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:**

- Managing referrals from staff or any others from outside the school;
- Working with external agencies and professionals on matters of safety and safeguarding;
- Undertaking relevant training and attending update sessions;
- Raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents; and ensuring that child protection information is transferred to the pupil's new school
- Ensuring that the school has a nominated board member to liaise with the Dean in the case of any allegations against the Principals.
- Ensuring all staff receive the appropriate training, and keep it up to date, in line with good practice from the UK and Romanian guidance.
- Managing security both physical and including the expectation of staff to understand the importance of filtering and monitoring of the access to the internet within the school and reviewing it annually;
- To ensure that the monitoring and filtering system are in place on the school's IT system.
- Ensuring that important policies, such as those for conduct/behaviour and bullying, are kept up to date;
- Keeping up to date all child records;
- Have an overview of the numbers of safeguarding and child protection referrals made from the principal, who reports (anonymously), to the Board termly and annually about the safeguarding activity over the previous term/year.
- Having in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families;
- Ensuring that the curriculum makes best use of Citizenship and PSHE opportunities to cover safeguarding issues with children;
- Ensuring at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- Ensuring the adherence to statutory responsibilities to check staff working with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Ensuring procedures are in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children.
- Ensuring that there is support available for staff involved in difficult child protection cases/incidents both at the school and externally through counselling and/or other services.
- Creating a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and in the school's development;





- Ensuring through the curriculum that students know the process of raising a concern (about themselves or a friend/other), that they know the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy).
- Making this policy available to parents and carers as appropriate;

The designated safeguarding lead is: Ilinca Vlaicu

The deputy designated safeguarding leads, who can take the role of the designated safeguarding lead in their absence, are: April Wuest, Ashley Peek, Irina Cazacu, Julie Dinca and Ana Abatacesei.

Nominated Advisory Board member for safeguarding: Ximena Reyes.

### **3.3 All staff, volunteers and Board members have responsibility for the following:**

- to provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- all staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.
- to keep themselves updated with the systems within the school which support safeguarding that were explained to them as part of their induction (including the staff Code of Conduct). This includes knowing the role, and working with, the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- to ensure they receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

In addition to working with the designated safeguarding lead, staff members should be aware that they may be asked to support case workers to take decisions about individual children.

All school staff are responsible for:

- Where children leave the school, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, and **within 5 days** for an in-year transfer or within the **first 5 days** of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives.(From KCSIE paragraph 121, for September 2023)
- Knowing who the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is: **Ilinca Vlaicu**
- Raising any concerns with the designated safeguarding lead. If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anyone can make this referral.
- (From KCSIE September 2031) - Staff "should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care" (para 60)
- Ensuring that their child protection training is up to date.
- Being alert to the signs of abuse and their need to refer any concerns to the designated staff member;



- Maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.
- Knowing the school's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, and reporting any such concerns to the designated lead.
- Listening to, and seeking out, the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people;
- Sharing information and working together to provide children and young people with the help they need;
- Raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime through the school's Whistle Blowing Policy.
- The need for an "appropriate adult" (usually a parent, guardian or social worker) while a student is being questioned or detained and interviewed by the police.' The necessity of an appropriate adult in the room when Police are interviewing a child in school - There is an expectation that the appropriate adult will "support, advise and assist" the young person, and also "observe whether the police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the young person's] rights and entitlements, and inform an officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not". (KCSIE Sept 2023)

### **3.4 Board members and Verita School leadership team are responsible for ensuring:**

- that the SLT create effective arrangements to safeguard and instil the welfare of students at the school;
- that the school has a designated lead for child protection, and that they have access to appropriate training, which is updated every two years;
- that the Head of school with the SLT implements the policy and procedures in full;
- that there is an effective Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in place together with a Staff Code of Conduct, which are provided to all staff, and ensuring all staff are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare;
- that policies and procedures adopted by the Board members, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.
- that they review the minutes from the termly safeguarding review meetings between the Head of School and the safeguarding team.
- that they review the handling of specific child protection cases when required;
- that the Founder (and Advisory Board members if necessary) will act as case manager if there is an allegation against the Superintendent of the school's group.

## **4.0 Safeguarding Processes and Procedures**



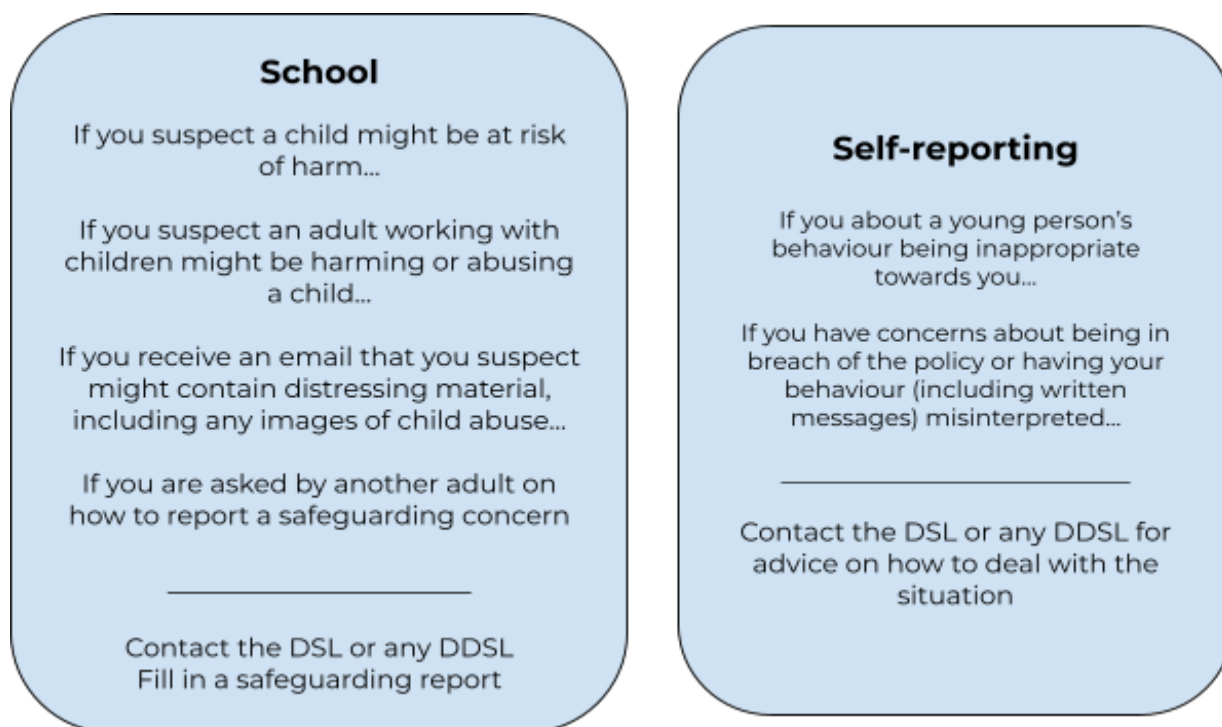
The school will deliver its responsibilities for identifying and acting on early help needs, safeguarding and child protection in line with the policies and procedures identified in both Romania and the UK's policies and procedure guidance.

#### **4.1. How to report any concerns:**

Clear procedures on reporting any concerns are given to all staff/ volunteers in Verita School. This is done as part of the staff induction training. All child protection and or safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to:

- Name: Ilinca Vlaicu, Position: DSL and School Counsellor
- Name: Ana Abatacesei, Position: DDSL and School Counsellor
- Name: April Wuest, Position: DDSL and Principal of Primary
- Name: Julie Dinca, Position: DDSL and Assistant Principal of Primary
- Name: Ashley Peek, Position: DDSL and Principal of Secondary
  
- Name: Irina Cazacu, Position: DDSL and Assistant Principal of Secondary

See Appendix 2 for a table which explains how all disclosures are dealt with at the school.



#### **4.2. Taking Action**

If the child has an injury that requires medical attention, the child protection process will not delay the administration of first aid or emergency medical assistance.

#### **4.3 Student disclosure of abuse or radicalisation**

At Verita School, we have a clear procedure for reporting concerns. If a student talks to a member



of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the student know that the staff member must pass the information on. Staff members will allow them to speak freely and will not ask investigative questions.

The staff member will tell the student what will happen next. It is the duty of the member of staff to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of what has been discussed. The staff member will write up details of the conversation with the student as soon as possible on the record of concern form and deliver it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All concerns should be recorded promptly and passed in person to. See Appendices for a flowchart to explain the procedure.

Staff should not wait until the following school day to report a concern. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only. Issues or concerns will not be discussed with colleagues, friends or family.

#### **4.4 Suspecting that a student is at risk of harm:**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk.

Staff should use the concern form to record these early concerns. Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Ilinca Vlaicu**, or the **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, April Wuest, Ashley Peek, Irina Cazacu, Julie Dinca and Ana Abatacesei**. Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the School's Anti-Bullying Policy where necessary, (located on the school's website). However, there will be occasions when a student's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. The school acknowledges that some children can be particularly vulnerable or may have an increased risk of abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children that are considered to be vulnerable.

#### **Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents. The Designated safeguarding lead **Ilinca Vlaicu** will make contact with the parents in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child, exacerbate the problem or compromise the safety of a staff member, advice will first be sought from Romanian Social Care.

#### **Referral to Children's Social Care**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to Romanian social care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.



The school also references ICMEC <https://www.icmec.org/education-portal/child-protection/> for advice support and key contact details to support students who may be vulnerable to missing from education due to moving country or who could be vulnerable to breaches if child protection regulations through moving country and to new international schools.

## 5.0 Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

Verita follows [the recommendations of the International Task Force on Child Protection Recommended Screening and Assessment Practices for International School Recruitment](#) when hiring staff and approving volunteers. The school uses the above linked checklist in its recruitment process, which is detailed in the school's [Safer Recruitment Policy](#).

The school will ensure that Safer Recruitment practices are always followed. Every interview panel will have at least one member who has a current certificate in Safer Recruitment. We will check on the identity of candidates, follow up references with referees and scrutinise applications for gaps in employment. We will ensure that safeguarding considerations are at the centre of each stage of the recruitment process.

We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our school.

Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.

We will ensure that all staff involved in recruitment has received (or is due to receive) safer recruitment training.

Police Background checks help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. The school will ensure that Police checks from each country the candidate has worked in must be provided prior to onboarding the new member of staff.

As part of the shortlisting process, we are carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Verita uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role.

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

1. Clearance of at least two satisfactory reference checks ;
2. Verification of identity and qualifications including evidence of the right to work in Romania;
3. A satisfactory criminal record check for all candidates covering the current country of residence/work and the country of origin;



4. Police checks are essential from all countries in which a prospective member of staff has taught previously. Acceptance into Romania will not be allowed without these documents.
5. The certificate of behavioral integrity is the legally required document in Romania for all school's employees and which is issued by the Romanian Police. (This applies for all local staff and for all international staff after 1 year of residence in Romania)  
*\* The authenticity of criminal records obtained online will be verified through the new online system, accessible at <https://hub.mai.gov.ro/verificadocument/verificare-document/verifica-document> . With the recent transition to this updated system for obtaining behavioral integrity certificates online, the verification process will be significantly improved.*
6. Verification of professional qualifications, where appropriate;
7. Declaration of satisfactory medical fitness.

Applicants must provide a satisfactory criminal record check for covering the current country of residence/work and the country of origin. Police checks are essential from all countries in which a prospective member of staff has taught previously. Acceptance into Romania will not be allowed without these documents. Applicants who have lived/traveled abroad for more than 6 months will need to obtain a police check from the relevant Country.

The certificate of behavioral integrity is the legally required document in Romania for all school's employees and which is issued by the Romanian Police. (This applies for all local staff and for all international staff after 1 year of residence in Romania)

The authenticity of criminal records and diplomas is verified through the apostille and immigrations process conducted together with the school's lawyers. Interpol database is also inquired for validity of the information.

References for short listed applicants will be requested in advance of an offer of employment. These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up by direct contact by phone or face-to-face with each referee to verify the reference.

Two Referee 'check up calls' with applicant's supervisors and 2 'Reference Request' forms must be undertaken to ensure the validity of the referees and the candidate that they are giving testimony for. For any SLT position we seek up to 5 reference checks (phone calls and/or virtual meetings) from the most recent or other previous employers, targeting only Head of School Roles.

Reference Checks will be done by at least 2 people involved in the recruitment panel.

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personal files, a single centralized record of employees, volunteers and contractors is kept up-to-date and stored in a secured google drive.



## 6.0 Dealing with allegations against existing staff and volunteers who work with children

We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023).

At Verita School, we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the academy should be taken to the appropriate person as indicated in **Table 1.** (below)

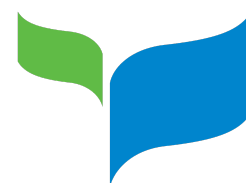
### 6.1 Who to report concerns to about staff

The following is a diagram of what to do if you have concerns about specific members of staff:

Safeguarding concern about:	A member of staff	Divisional Principal	The Head of School	The Superintendent
Step 1 This concern should be brought to:	<i>The DSL</i>	<i>The Head of School</i>	<i>The Superintendent</i>	<i>The Founder</i>
Step 2	The concern will be written down formally and signed and dated by the person raising the concern	The concern will be written down formally and signed and dated by the person raising the concern	The concern will be written down formally and signed and dated by the person raising the concern	The concern will be written down formally and signed and dated by the person raising the concern
Step 3	<i>The DSL</i> will investigate the concern and follow protocol	<i>The Head of School</i> will investigate the concern and follow protocol	<i>The Superintendent</i> will investigate the concern and follow protocol	<i>The Founder</i> will investigate the concern and follow protocol

**Table 1**

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. Under its duty of care for its employees, the school will ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. The school will ensure its obligations for





confidentiality when an allegation has been made.

Staff should clearly understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) and the Romanian Criminal Code **Art 220** is it an offence to have sexual relations with a minor under the age of 18 where the adult abused their position of authority (Position of Trust). This carries a minimum sentence of 2 years and a maximum sentence of 7 years in prison.

**Protocol for managing allegations of child abuse**

The protocol for managing allegations of child abuse by adults in international schools is designed to help school leaders around the world navigate many of these complexities and provide a robust and consistent response.

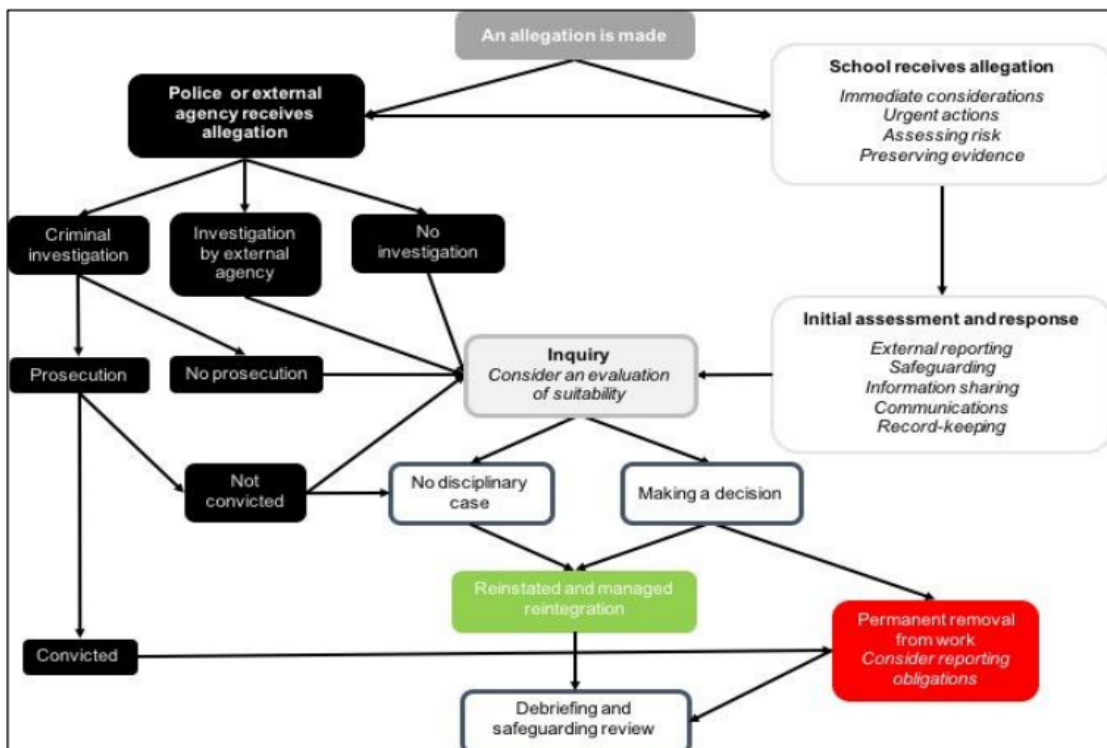
The protocol contains practical advice about the steps that schools can take

- (i) when an allegation arises; and
- (ii) after an allegation has been addressed.

This flow diagram from ICMEC 2023 assists the DSL team to follow the correct procedure and to ensure the community is kept safe.

Response

The protocol sets out the steps that school staff and leaders should take once an allegation of abuse comes out. It includes guiding principles that all schools should follow when managing an allegation, as well as advice on how to prioritise the different, and often conflicting, duties that schools can be faced with.





## Suspension

Suspension will not be the default position and is only considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that the child /children are at risk of harm or the case is serious to the point that it could be grounds for dismissal.

In such cases Verita only suspends a staff member if all other options available have been considered and no reasonable alternative can be put in place.

A risk assessment will be undertaken to establish.

- Can the staff member be assigned to a different area in the school where they do not have direct contact with the child/children concerne?
- Can the child or children join other classes where they will not come into contact with the staff member?

Definitions for the outcomes of allegation investigations:

**Substantiated** - there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

**Malicious** -there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and a deliberate choice or act has been taken to deceive

**False** - there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

**Unsubstantiated** - there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)

**Unfounded** - to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

In the event of such an allegation occurring the case manager (See table 1 in section 6) will follow the flow diagram:

1. Discuss the case with the DSL team as appropriate.
2. Follow who needs to be contacted as in the diagram above (i.e. social care services, police etc.)
3. Inform the staff member of the concerns or allegations after following the protocol diagram and advice from social care/police if they deem it appropriate to share details as have been agreed with those agencies.
4. Where appropriate in the circumstances we must consider carefully whether suspension of the individual from contact with the children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined previously in this suspension section can be put in place
5. If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree, and record the reasons for this decision with the designated lead. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected.

*Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within one working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.*

6. If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to allegation or concern, you should record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated lead what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what



action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

7. If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the designated lead to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police, and/or children's social care services as appropriate.
8. Provide effective case-by-case support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case (including only that information which agencies have stated can be shared) and consider what other support is appropriate and available.
9. Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. *Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.*
10. Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence).
11. Make a referral to relevant agencies, including ACRO, where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child. ISB will inform relevant agencies, such as Ofsted, Ministry of Education in Romania of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), and any action taken in respect of the allegations. This notification will be made as soon as reasonably possible and always within 14 days of the allegations being made. Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Case Manager will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

### **TIMESCALES**

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 Week.
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action will occur within 3 working days.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further enquiry, this will be held within 15 working days.

### **SPECIFIC ACTIONS ACTION FOLLOWING A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION OR PROSECUTION**



The case manager will discuss with the designated lead whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

### **CONCLUSION OF A CASE WHERE THE ALLEGATION IS SUBSTANTIATED**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school stops to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise stops to provide their services, the case manager and HR will discuss with the designated lead whether to make a referral to the relevant agencies, including ACRO and Ministry of Education for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager will discuss with the designated lead whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) or Ministry of Education in Romania to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

**INDIVIDUALS RETURNING TO WORK AFTER SUSPENSION** If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this. The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **UNSUBSTANTIATED OR MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS**

*If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious,*

*The Head of School, or the Superintendent in the case of an allegation against the Head of School, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s)/ teacher(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.*

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

*The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.*

*The case manager will take advice from the designated lead, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:*

- who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared;*
- how to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality;*
- what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation;*
- how to manage press interest if, and when, it arises.*

### **RECORD-KEEPING**



*The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.*

*Such records will include:*

- 1) a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation.*
- 2) details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved.*
- 3) notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above).*

*If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file and provide a copy to the individual. Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for relevant authorities and investigative bodies, for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer. The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file. When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.*

### **Post-case review and evaluation**

*After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, the school will review the circumstances of the case with designated lead and/or relevant people from police or child protection services, to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This must include consideration of (as applicable):*

- a) issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff;*
- b) the duration of the suspension;*
- c) whether or not the suspension was justified;*
- d) the use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated.*

*It then must be considered how all future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out if possible without suspending the individual.*

## **7.0 Managing situations and exit arrangements**

For the following issues:

- Resignation and settlement agreements;
- Record keeping
- References
- Timescales
- Oversight and Monitoring
- Children Missing in Education
- Suspension
- Information sharing
- Following a criminal investigation or prosecution
- On conclusion of a case
- In respect of malicious or unsubstantiated allegations



The school will ensure compliance with the guidance and regulations contained in the appropriate sections of the Keeping Children safe in Education (Sept 2022) document and any other requirements of Romanian labour law and CIS /COBIS requirements for the hiring and premature ending of contracts of staff.

We have a duty to share concerns with future employers if the member of staff was dismissed on the grounds of unsuitability to work with children.

## **8.0 Training for all staff and students to raise awareness and increase understanding**

Every year all staff (including non-teaching and volunteers) must undertake the Child Protection and Safeguarding training. This is recorded and logged. All staff are informed clearly on how to report anything of concern to the DSL immediately.

All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct.

The induction will be proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities. The DSL and DDSL will undergo updated child protection training every two years.

All staff members of the academy will undergo safeguarding and child protection training (whole academy training) which is regularly updated. All Board members must undergo governor specific online awareness training at least every two years.

Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another school's training.

We will ensure that any contractors who have to work for extended periods of time have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.

The DSL will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

All staff are also required to complete Educare online safeguarding trainings each year. The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

## **9.0 Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop**

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with students, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. We therefore establish a safe environment where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. This can happen at any time, but more specifically during lessons, in Social Emotional Ethical lessons, or simply with any member of staff.



We are thoroughly committed to teaching all our students about risks and place emphasis on them learning about how to minimise risk. This is done through our SEE programme and through the school engaging in national and local initiatives such as; anti-bullying awareness days, e-safety programmes, and other programmes which raise their awareness and increase their understanding.

### **9.1 Anti-bullying**

Verita International School acknowledges its responsibility to protect all students from bullying. The aim of Verita's Anti-Bullying Policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that every member of the school community can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. At Verita School, we utilise our SEL programme and international initiatives to raise awareness on bullying and response steps.

If any student / member of staff / parent / carer has a concern about bullying, they should report it to: the DSL or DDSL, as described in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **9.2 E-Safety**

We are thoroughly committed to improving student's e-safety awareness at Verita School.

If a student, parent/carer or member of staff has a concern relating to e-safety students are encouraged to report it. They can report it directly to Julie Dinca (Tech Integration Coordinator) at the school or via Designated Safeguarding Lead or their assistants.

### **9.3 Photography and images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect students, we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Seek parental consent
- Use only the students first name with an image
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Add acceptable and unacceptable use of mobile devices in the students' Bring Your Own Educational Device Policy
- Encourage students to communicate concerns about any photographs that are taken of them. Parents, carers or relatives may only take still or video photographic images of pupils in the school or on school-organised activities with the prior consent of the school and then only in designated areas. If parents do not wish their children to be photographed or filmed and express this view in writing, their rights will be respected.

## **10.0 Confidentiality and sharing information**

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, or Head of School (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a



need-to-know basis. All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the student and staff involved but also to ensure that anything being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

### **Storage and handling of records**

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the principles set out in the Data protection and GDPR policy. Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility accessed only by the Head, Divisional Principals, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads.

Any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals. Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access. Sensitive information will not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be password protected and kept in locked storage.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the student's academy file. If such records need to be sent to a new school they will be sent separate from the student's file and under a confidential cover.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the data protection and GDPR policy which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Head of School, Divisional Principals or Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

When a Concern Form has been submitted to the DSL (Appendix 4), the DSL will open and complete a Child Protection File (Appendix 5), if there is not already one established, detailing important background information relating to the child, e.g. date of birth, religion, contacts, family information, etc.

Verita is making efforts to implement a secure storing process through the new Verita platform, which will be complete will workflows, permissions and data protection by the end of the first semester of this academic year. All action taken must be recorded in the relevant sections of the submitted Concern Form, together with any updates. This is maintained and kept securely by the DSL in a secure online area accessible only to the DSL team in the child's file in a locked cabinet (currently). The child protection files are updated when new information is available (e.g. through monitoring and observations) including any other relevant information relating to the child (e.g. incidents, family background changes, etc).

The Data Protection Act does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## **11.0 Management of the Policy**

The school will at all times adhere fully to the Romanian Child protection guidelines and will use the UK child protection regulations and guidelines as the benchmark for standards within the school.

The DSLs will also work with a local CIS accredited school to ensure best practice is maintained.



The DSL team will evaluate the rigour of the policies in places in school to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

The Advisory Board Members will oversee the policy, ensure its implementation and review its content on an annual basis.

The Head of School will report on safeguarding activity and progress within the school to the Advisory Board members annually.

### **11.1 Feedback on this policy:**

Staff are encouraged to feedback to Verita School directly through email at any point in the year. The DSL and Head of School will also seek the views of staff when the opportunity arises and feedback to the Advisory Board Members.

*Created and Reviewed by: Verita Founder and the Senior Leadership Team*

*This policy will be reviewed on at least an annual basis*

*Policy Category: Health and Safety*

*Approved by Richard Joannides*

*Next Review: Aug 2024*

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1:**

*Law 272/2004 regarding Child protection The law 272/2004 addresses to*

#### **Art 3 :**

- a) Romanian citizens who live in Romania.*
- b) Romanian citizens who live abroad.*
- c) Foreign children that live in Romania.*
- d) Refugees' children who benefit from legal protection.*
- e) Foreign children that live in Romania and are in an emergency situation approved by Romanian public authorities.*

#### **Art 33**

*(1) The child has the right to be respected his/her personality as well as his/her individuality and is forbidden to be exposed to corporal punishment or other types of humiliating treatments.*





*(2) The disciplinary measures for a child have to be established in agreement with respecting the child's dignity. Corporal punishments or any other type of punishment that are affecting the physical, mental, social and emotional development of a child are totally forbidden.*

**Art. 85**

*(1) The child has the right to be protected against any form of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, human trafficking, illegal migration, kidnapping, violence, internet pornography, as well as any form of violence, regardless of the environment where he is: family, educational institutions, medical institutions, protection environment, detention/rehabilitation and offence research institutions, internet, mass-media, work place, sports environment, community etc.*

*(2) Any individual or legal entity, as well as the child, can notify the Child Protection Services (Directia Generala de Asistenta si Protectia Copilului) of the county/sector where they live to act in order to protect the child against any forms of violence including exploitation, abandonment or neglect.*

*(3) The employees of public or private institutions which through their profession come in contact with the child and are suspecting that there might be a case of abuse, neglect or bad treatment have the obligation to urgently notify the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection.*

**Art: 91**

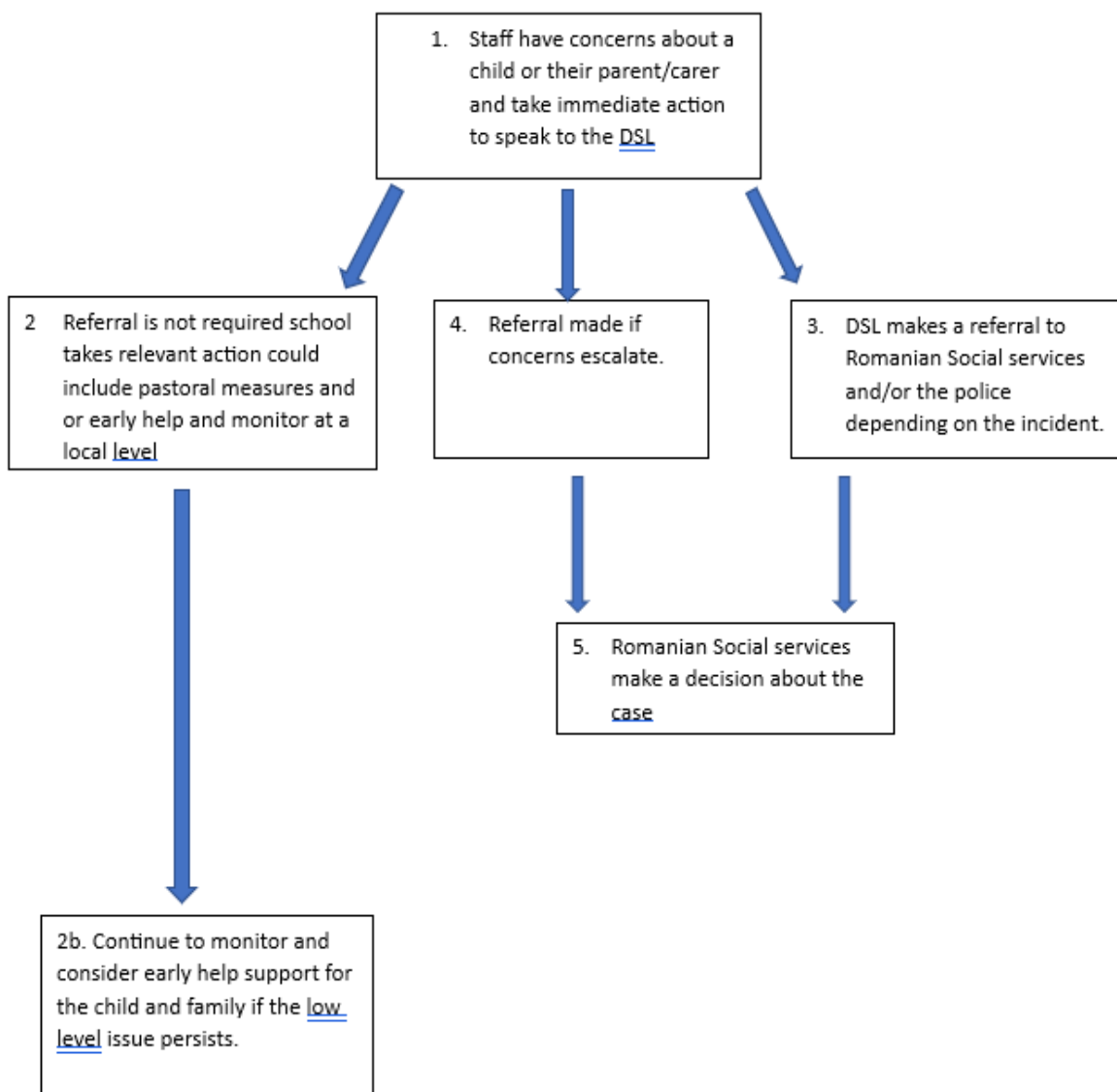
*Any individual who through the nature of their profession or occupation, work directly with a child and is suspecting that there might exist a case of abuse or neglect of the child, has the legal obligation to notify the social services (serviciul public de asistenta sociala) or Child Protection services in the area in which the case has been identified.*

- 1) In order to facilitate the notification of child abuse or neglect cases, for every child protection branch it is mandatory the existence of a child telephone number which will be communicated to the population.*



**Appendix 2**

**Safeguarding action flowchart**



### **Appendix 3**

## **Affluent neglect**

*Affluent neglect refers to the neglect experienced by children in wealthy families. Often, neglect in wealthier families can be more difficult to spot, as the type of neglect experienced by children and young people in these circumstances is often emotional.*

*There are a huge number of risks that children face from all walks of life and being a child in an affluent family is often perceived to protect those children from some of these dangers. In reality, children from affluent families aren't as sheltered from neglect as some of us may think.*

*In wealthy families, it can be the case that parents work long hours, leaving children in the care of paid carers. This can create an emotional disconnect and leave children feeling lonely, with their emotional needs unfulfilled by their parents.*

*It has also been suggested that as well as not spending quality time with their children, affluent parents may put a high amount of pressure on their children to succeed academically, which can sometimes lead to psychological and emotional problems for children.*

*Alcohol & substance abuse and domestic violence are three factors (also known as the toxic trio) that are often considered problems that only occur in poorer families; however, this is not the case. These same issues are also found in affluent families and have lasting effects on the children in the home.*

*It can sometimes be the case that due to a lack of parental supervision and guidance, wealthy parents may have a more relaxed attitude to the risks their children take, or in many cases aren't sufficiently present or available to know about what their children are doing. This can lead to increased risks for their children, who may have the financial means to facilitate drug abuse and the independence to engage in harmful sexual activity.*

**From "The Safeguarding Company" - 2023.**



**Appendix 4**

 *Child Protection Concerns form.docx*

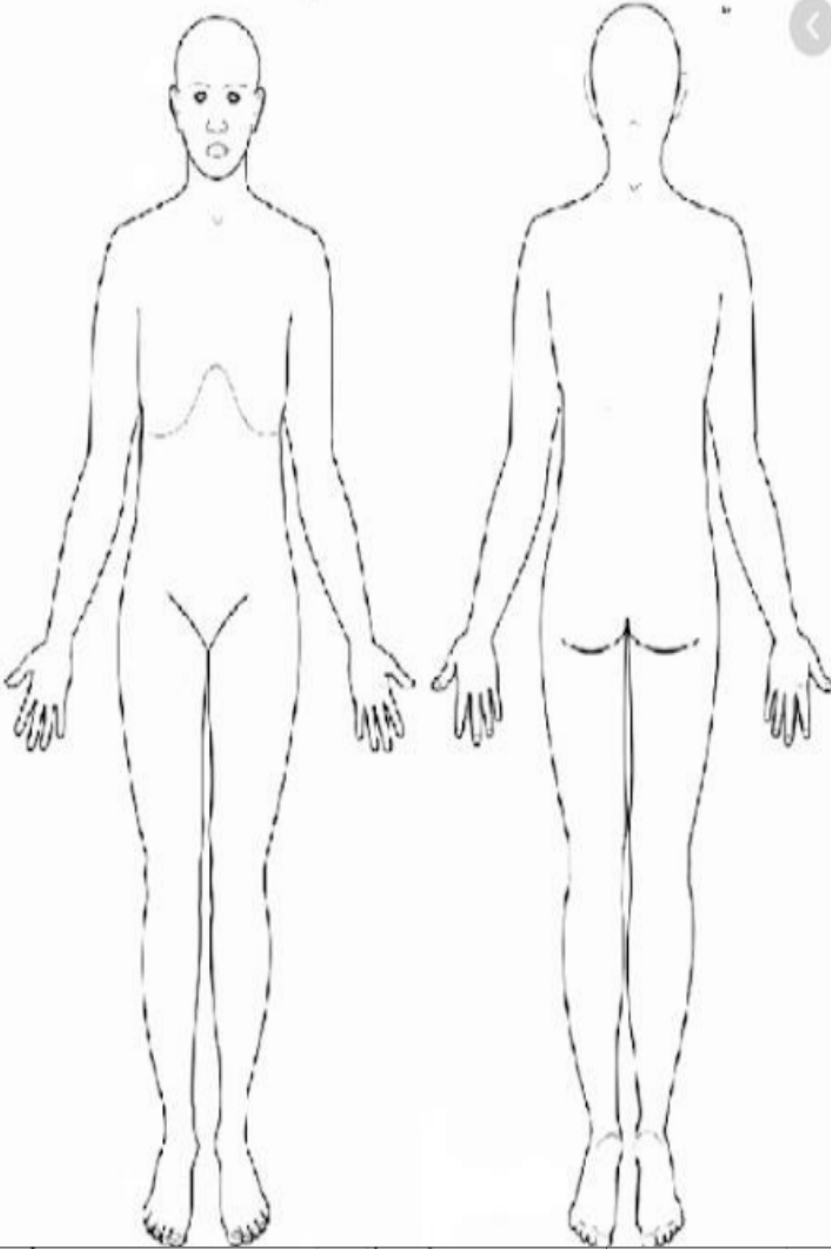
<b>Reporting concerns for a child at Verita International School</b>	
Surname: _____ First Name:	Class:
Full name of person reporting:	Role:
Date and time of this report:	
Date and time of the incident/event giving concern:	
<p>Please describe the nature of the concern: The incident/event/observation should be described clearly and concisely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Record <b>word for word</b> what the child says in English or their home language.</li> <li>● If you need to, please record where marks can be seen on a body map on this form. Do not examine the child or take pictures, only record what you can see or where the child may point to.</li> <li>● Be factually accurate, i.e. not opinion (any interpretation or assumptions should be clearly recorded as such).</li> </ul>	

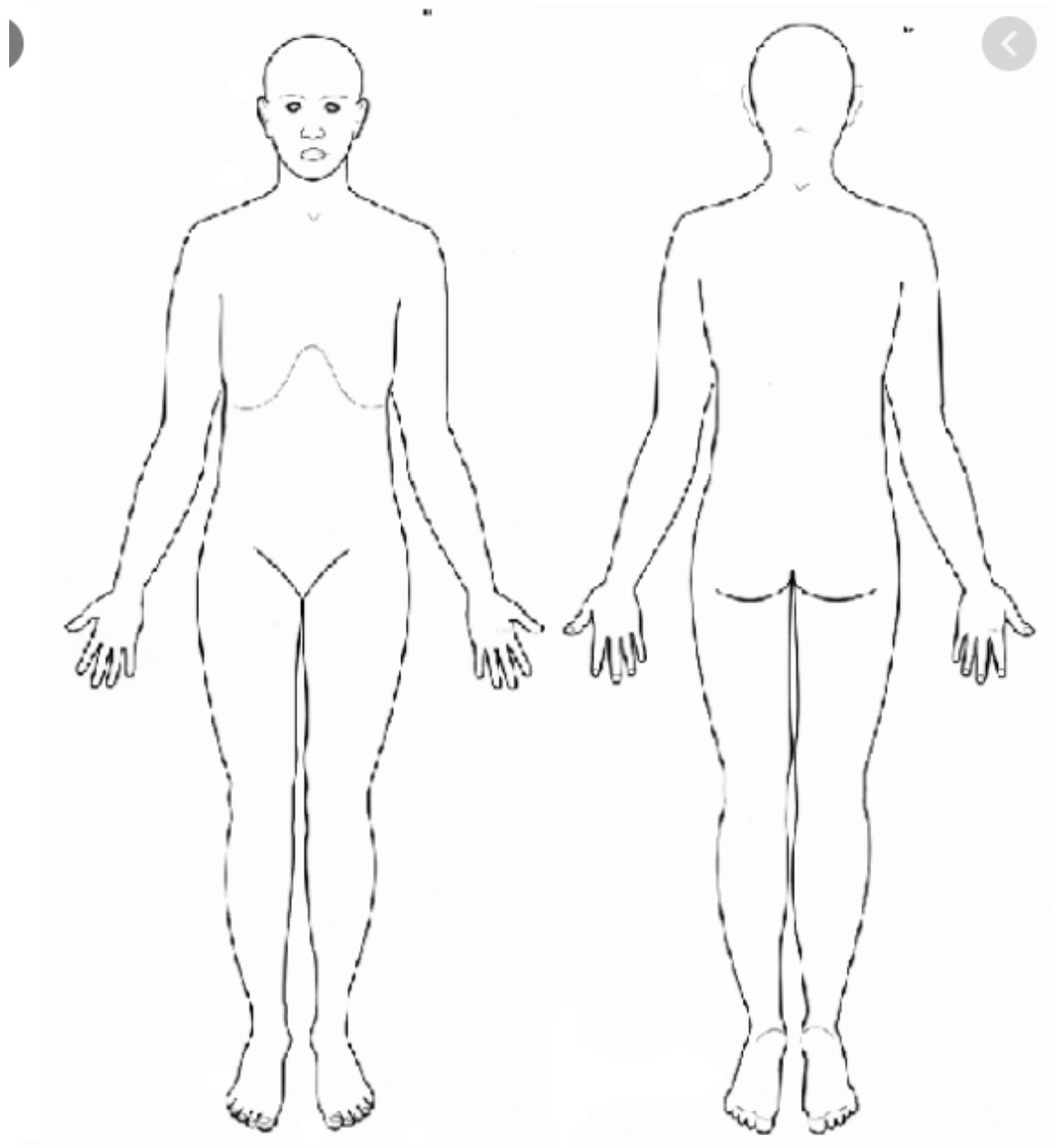


Record any questions that the reporter asked (Consider TED Tell-Explain-Decide)	
Record a the names of those involved, including any witnesses	
Record where the incident/event/observation took place and how the information was learned:	
Time and date:	Signed _____
Person reported incident to:	Action taken:

Please indicate the marks on the body maps

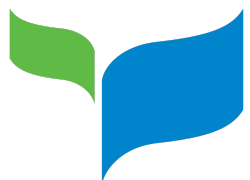






## **Appendix 5**

Child protection front cover sheet of each child's file:



## Safeguarding File

<b>Safeguarding Levels of Concern</b>			
<b>Level</b>	<b>Description: At this level the child or family...</b>	<b>What needs to happen next?</b>	<b>Assessment/referral process</b>
<b>Level 1: Universal</b>	Student is thriving and shows no indicators of need	Ensure that families are aware of the safeguarding policies and available school resources.	None needed
<b>Level 2: Early help/ Prevention</b>	May require or benefit from additional support or services (eg. counselling etc)	When the child begins to display emerging needs for additional help, referral is made to the SEN department for deeper understanding.	The SEN department considers intervention needs and creates a plan as needed.
<b>Level 3: Intensive Family Support</b>	The child is experiencing multiple and complex needs. The child may be in emotional danger through home or social relationships.	If the child's needs cannot be managed within the school community, referrals may be made to outside agencies with the cooperation of the family.	An early help assessment is conducted by the Child protection team and an intervention plan is written.
<b>Level 4: Child in Need</b>	The child is unlikely to maintain or achieve a reasonable standard of development without the support of additional services.	The child and family issues continue to escalate or the interventions are not working. After a sound and thorough record of interventions and supports, a referral is made to a social care agency.	Written Summary of interventions. Referral to social care agencies is made.
<b>Level 5: Child Protection</b>	The child is at risk of or is suffering significant harm. Has a high level of complex needs that require statutory interventions.	Immediate intervention to social care, child protection or law enforcement to ensure the safety of the child.	Provide all documentation to the receiving agency.

### Front Sheet: Child Protection Record

Date file started:





Information Field	Initial Result	Changed to	Changed to
<b>Safeguarding level of concern</b>			
<b>Romanian Social Services status:</b>			
<b>Name of child:</b>			
<b>Date of birth:</b>			
<b>Address:</b> (including postcode)			
<b>Other family members:</b> (include full name, relationship, if under 18 include age and school where known)			
<b>Name and contact number of Family Doctor if known:</b>			



Information Field	Initial Result	Changed to	Changed to
Are any other child protection files held in school relating to another child closely connected to this child? [Yes/No and details]			

### Chronology/Significant Events Sheet

Child's name:

This information is gathered to provide an overview of the nature of concerns and details of significant professional interventions.

Date & Time	Nature of contact including name(s)	Key issues discussed & actions agreed or taken in response	Level of concern	Signature and role of record keeper




**Additional Items for the file**

- Any notes initially recorded in the form of notebooks or diaries.
- Records of discussions, telephone calls and meetings (with colleagues, other agencies or services, parents and children/young people).
- Records of the settings decision making, as well as action taken and appropriate



justifications.

- Professional consultations.

- Letters sent and received.
- Print outs of emails or other electronic communications sent and received.
- Referral forms (both for external and education-based services).
- Minutes of meetings (copies for each child as appropriate).
- Formal plans linked to the child (e.g. Child Protection Plan).

In cases where information is held in this variety of formats it may be helpful to use a ring binder file and organise this on a 'modular' basis for ease of reference i.e. sections titled:

- Setting records
- Letters
- Multi-agency records
- Health

