

Brent International School Manila Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement:

Brent International School Manila (BISM) is committed to the safety, health and welfare of all students. In alignment with Brent Schools' Mission Statement and Framework, the protocols of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Council of International Schools (CIS), Department of Education Order No. 40, s. 2012, the Philippines Republic Act No. 7610, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ to which the Philippines is a signatory, the school seeks to identify abuse and protect children from danger.

Schools stand in a unique position, wherein there is an opportunity to observe and note the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect among its students. Therefore, every personnel regardless of tenure, rank and/or position has a moral and professional obligation to report any and all abuse or suspected abuse of children immediately.

Reporting and follow through of all suspected incidents will adhere to due process with consideration for confidentiality of student affairs. In all cases, the child's safety and welfare is the primary concern. In line with this, the Headmaster may decide to report cases of suspected child abuse/abusers and neglect to appropriate employment sponsors, to the respective embassies of the parties involved, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or local authorities, if such is the appropriate course of action.

BISM seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, the school will make this policy available to all parents and applicants. BISM endeavor to communicate this policy to students, provide training for all staff, and make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of its students. If a BISM employee was reported as an alleged offender, BISM will conduct a full investigation providing due process and keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.

Definitions of Abuse:

What is child protection / safeguarding children?

- The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect. It involves measures and structures designed to prevent abuse and neglect in children.

What is child abuse?

- A form of maltreatment of a child, which can be caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

There are four categories of child abuse:

- 1.) PHYSICAL ABUSE --- Physical injury inflicted upon the child with cruel and or

malicious intent. It includes assigning children to perform tasks which are hazardous to their physical well-being. Physical abuse can be the result of any physical assault which includes but not limited to punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, throwing, poisoning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, among others.

a) Sample manifestations of physical abuse

- Unexplained bruises or swelling on any parts of the body
- Bruises on different areas, various colors
- Bruised scalp, which indicates head trauma
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand, etc)
- Injuries that often appear after absences or vacations
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries accompanied by inconsistent information from the child
- Immersion scald burns with a distinctive boundary line
- Unexplained lacerations, abrasions, or fractures
- Bite marks: visible wounds with indentation or bruising from individual teeth
- Arms and legs kept covered during warm weather
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Fear of returning home, or of parents being contacted

2) EMOTIONAL ABUSE – Includes threats, humiliation, sarcastic remarks, degrading punishments, harassments, stalking, reduction of grade or merit as a form of punishment, undermining confidence, repeated verbal abuse, and when a child is denied love and affection. It is also the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. These should not be construed to include standard disciplinary measures taken in an educational context as described in the Student Parent Handbook.

a) Sample manifestations of emotional abuse:

- Physical, mental or emotional development is delayed
- Dressed differently from other children in the family
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behavior: self-harming, suicide attempts, engaging in alcohol or drug abuse
- Overly compliant, too well-mannered, too neat and clean
- Displays attention-seeking behavior
- Display of negative acts and/or mannerisms probably acquired through constant exposure of the same negative acts and/or mannerisms at home
- Constant lying

3) SEXUAL ABUSE – Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities. There are 2 types of sexual abuse, contact and non contact.

➤➤ Contact

- Touching for sexual gratification of any part of the body whether the child is wearing clothes or not
- Rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
- Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity
- Making a child remove clothing
- Making a child touch their own, or other's, genitals

➤➤ Noncontact

- Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- Not taking proper measures to prevent a child from being exposed to sexual activities by others
- Sexual grooming (building an emotional connection to gain a child's trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation), or meeting a child, with the intent of abusing them
- Online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images for the purpose of sexual gratification.
- Allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images
- Showing pornography to a child
- Trading grades for sexual favors

a) Sample manifestations of sexual abuse:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior or use of language inappropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Venereal disease in any child of any age
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting due to anal or vaginal soreness
- Refusing to change into P.E. clothes, fear of bathrooms
- Child running away from home but not giving specific complaints
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual, frightened and reluctant to socialize with friends
- Refusal to continue with school or social activities
- Pregnancy, especially at a young age
- Extremely protective parenting

4) NEGLECT --- Failure to give the child basic physical and psychological needs. There are 3 types of neglect.

➤➤ Physical neglect

- Failure to provide necessary food, drink or shelter
- Repeatedly leaving the child in the care of others
- Leaving the child with an inappropriate guardian
- Failure to provide clothes necessary for the weather
- Failure to ensure adequate personal hygiene

- Exposing the child to unsafe or unsanitary environments
- Emotional neglect
 - Ignoring a child’s need for attention, affection and emotional support
 - Exposing a child to extreme or frequent violence, especially domestic violence
 - Permitting a child to use drugs, alcohol or engage in crime
 - Keeping a child isolated from friends and loved ones
- Medical neglect
 - Not taking the child to the hospital for a serious illness or injury
 - Not providing preventive and medical care
 - Failure to follow medical recommendations

a) Some manifestations of child neglect:

- Child wears wrong-sized, dirty and inappropriate clothing for the weather
- Child is unwashed or hungry and may even show signs of malnutrition
- Parents are uninterested in their child’s academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communication from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Untreated medical and dental problems
- Child has poor hygiene
- Child is showing extreme loneliness or need for affection

Code of Conduct:

Brent is committed to the safety and protection of students. This Safeguarding Policy applies to all employees and volunteers who represent Brent and who interact with students in both a direct and/or indirect capacity. We, as Brent personnel, should be aware of and adhere to these guidelines with regards to Child Safeguarding.

- Be aware of our own and other’s vulnerability.
- Be responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries with students.
- Do not engage in sexual activity or have sexual relations with any Brent student, irrespective of the definition of the age of majority or the way in which consent is legally recognized in different countries.
- Avoid any covert or overt flirtations with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes speech (such as saying “*Hello, Beautiful*” or “*Hello, Handsome*” or “*Hi, Gorgeous*”) or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. Any gesture that makes a student feel uncomfortable is a gesture that should not be made.
- Do not touch a student inappropriately.
 - Be aware of how touch may be perceived or received.
 - Brent employees are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.
- Avoid working alone with students.

If a one-on-one meeting with a student is necessary, hold the meeting in a public area, where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open. Inform another staff member about the

meeting.

- Always intervene when there is evidence, or reasonable cause to suspect, that students are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported as outlined in the reporting procedures below.
- Any form of hazing is not permitted at Brent.
- Do not condone or participate in behavior by students that is illegal, abusive or endangers their safety.
- Do not act in ways that sets a negative example for any student present;
- Do not use tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with students.
- Never give students any drugs, cigarettes, images or reading material that is inappropriate.
- Do not discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favor to particular students
- Avoid accepting gifts from students or their parents in situations where this may be misconstrued as a personal favor or favoritism.
- Do not engage in inappropriate personal contact with Brent students using online communication (e---mail, chats, social networks, etc.).
 - The use of social media and other forms of communication with students is governed by the Brent Digital Communications Policy. All Brent employees should be familiar with its contents.
- Do not hit, assault, or physically or psychologically abuse any Brent student.
- Do not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade students or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Do not verbally threaten a student.
- Do not insult a student.
 - Example: Calling a student fat or lazy is unacceptable.
- Do not use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do not do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Do not offer transportation to a student without parental or administrative permission, unless it is an emergency;
- Avoid sleeping in the same room as a Brent student unless this is pre---approved by the parent and is needed as a safety measure.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The basic principle is that you must avoid behavior that is inappropriate or potentially abusive towards children.

Reporting Procedures for Abuse:

Brent International School Manila requires that all members of the community familiarize themselves with these reporting requirements in the event that they witness or become aware of student abuse. Updates are regularly provided to members of the community regarding changes in policy/procedures and current student protection practice through staff meetings, the faculty handbook, Student---Parent Handbooks, and the Brent school website. Expectations for reporting include acting with tact, confidentiality, and sympathy; avoiding “over---questioning” of the victim; and assembling complete and detailed notes (including date and time of any observations or conversations with the student)

immediately.

- 1) Any member of the Brent community who experiences, observes, or receives a report of signs and/or behaviors that suggest abuse or a violation of the spirit of the school's Code of Conduct must immediately notify the Guidance Counselor and/or the School Level Principal.
- 2) The Guidance Counselor, the School Level Principal, and the reporting faculty or community member must review, organize, and document all data points. All reported abuse cases will then be reported to the Headmaster immediately by the School Level Principal.
- 3) Three potential case scenarios are addressed in this Policy:
 - a) "No Grounds" case – If the Guidance Counselor, the School Level Principal, the reporting faculty or community member, the Headmaster, and other involved personnel determine there are no grounds for the abuse allegations or a violation of the spirit of the Code of Conduct then the result of the case will be officially documented and archived. The gathered information and a record of discussions held will be kept on file.
 - b) "Suspicion Remains" case – If evidence is lacking or incomplete, but suspicion for abuse remains, then the Guidance Counselor, the School Level Principal, the reporting faculty member, and the Headmaster will maintain confidential timed and dated notes, and meet regularly to evaluate any further developments in the case in question. Disclosure of ongoing cases of suspected abuse will be reported to the President/CEO and the involved parents as soon as possible. Where parents are the perpetrators of the abuse, the school may instead report to other family members or agencies as deemed most appropriate to an individual child's safety. The gathered information will be kept on file and periodic updates will be provided to the President/CEO and Board as the circumstances of the case merit.
 - c) "Abuse Likely or Confirmed" case – If documented evidence suggests abuse (including that which is alleged to have occurred off campus) the Headmaster, following written disclosure to and discussion with the President/CEO, will immediately report cases of suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities. Such authorities may include the alleged perpetrator's employer and/or Embassy, the appropriate child protection agency in the home country of the alleged perpetrator, and in accordance with Philippine law the appropriate local authorities. The Headmaster, in consultation with the President/CEO, and the Board and legal/professional advisers as needed, will take all actions necessary to ensure the safety of the student and the community.
- 4) In the case of abuse, the School Level Principal and the Headmaster will determine the appropriate course of action for the protection of the victim and discipline for the aggressor. The gathered information will be kept on file and timely periodic updates, in writing, will be provided to the President/CEO and Board as the circumstances/status of the case merits.
- 5) Brent community members will be informed of reported abuse allegations on a need-to-know basis only. Parents of the student(s) involved in reported abuse allegations will be notified as early in the process as is appropriate for the safety and security of all involved parties. Any additional written information/observations from other personnel will be included in documentation

- 6) All Brent community members are expected to report any knowledge of suspected or identified child abusers or sex offenders within the school community. In the event that a Brent community member is alleged or discovered to be an abuser or sex offender, Brent will conduct a full investigation and involve the appropriate authorities. The investigation shall proceed in accordance with the administrative reporting procedure outlined in this policy.