



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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OSCARS Child Protection Policy

Introduction

- This policy applies to all staff employed by OSCARS who work with or come into regular contact with children in the course of their duties.
- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18. (The Children Act 1989 and the Vetting and Barring Scheme 2009*)
- Sexual activity with or directed toward a person under 18 by an adult who is in a position of trust with the under 18 year old is a criminal offence. (Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- All OSCARS staff working with children have the duty to make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- OSCARS staff should implement this policy using the guidelines provided. This will protect the safety and well-being of children attending courses and staff employed to work on courses at OSCARS language schools and residential centres.
- At least one senior member of staff at OSCARS language schools or residential centres will be known to all staff as the Child Protection Officer and should raise awareness of this policy and its guidelines among OSCARS staff and where appropriate group leaders and children in OSCARS's care.
- In centres where there are homestay arrangements for students the Local Homestay Organiser will be the Child Protection Officer for homestay related concerns.
- All OSCARS staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the named Child Protection Officer.
- The named Child Protection Officer for OSCARS language schools is Edward Carden, Rowlandson House, Finchley, London
- The second Designated Liaison Office for Child Protection issues is Aidan O Shea, 33 Dame St, Dublin, Ireland

Statement of intent

OSCARS are committed to safeguarding children from harm and believe that:

- **The welfare of the child is paramount**
- **All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs**

OSCARS will ensure that:

- **All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately**
- **The OSCARS Child Protection Policy will be reviewed regularly**

OSCARS have a commitment to:

- **Safe recruitment, selection and vetting of staff**
- **Making known to all staff the policies and procedures in place that promote the safety and welfare of children including; health and safety*, anti-bullying, the code of conduct for staff working with under 18s, and contact with children under 18.**

(* See Health and Safety Manual)

Policy aims

The aim of OSCARS's Child Protection Policy is:

- **To promote good practice by providing children with appropriate protection and safety whilst in our care**
- **To provide OSCARS staff with clear guidelines and appropriate ongoing child protection training for working with children in their care.**
- **To allow staff to make informed responses to specific child protection issues**



Policy implementation

The OSCARS Child Protection Policy will be implemented by adhering to the guidelines within this document. All OSCARS staff must comply with this policy in conjunction with OSCARS's code of conduct for staff working with under

18s. The guidelines cover three main areas:

1. **Staff recruitment, support and training**
2. **Staff conduct**
3. **Child protection procedures**

1 **Staff recruitment, support and training**

Safe recruitment of OSCARS staff working with children will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children:

- At initial stage an application form is completed which will elicit information about the applicant's past
- All applicants must complete a Children Act 1989 declaration form
- All applicants are required to complete an application for a Criminal Record Bureau Check (Please see '**OSCARS Recruitment and Vetting Policy**' for more detail on staff recruitment policies and procedures)

1.1 **OSCARS homestay organisers and hosts**

All OSCARS local homestay organisers:

- Have completed the 'Basic Awareness In Child Protection' on-line certificate
- Attend regular meetings with Judith Morris, the OSCARS UK Homestay Manager and are briefed and updated on OSCARS Child Protection Policies and Procedures
- Are regularly updated on 'Vetting and Barring Scheme' and Child Protection issues
- Attend the senior staff induction for Vacation Courses and are briefed about the OSCARS Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Receive a copy of the OSCARS Child Protection Policy

OSCARS homestay hosts are:

- Required to complete a DBS/PVG check
- Visited regularly by Local Homestay Organisers and/or agencies
- Informed in writing about OSCARS's commitment to safeguarding children and Child Protection procedures in place and are issued with Child Protection guidelines
- Are regularly updated by Judith Morris/the Local Homestay Organiser on the review of the 'Vetting and Barring Scheme' and Child Protection issues

1.2 **OSCARS head office and Language Schools**

- All senior staff and managers will attend departmental child protection meetings and complete the 'Basic Awareness In Child Protection' on-line certificate course at www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk

1.3 **OSCARS Vacation Courses**

At the senior staff induction for Vacation Courses OSCARS head office departmental staff will:

- Brief all managers about requirements and responsibilities of their roles
- Explain child protection procedures
- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to uphold the OSCARS Code of Conduct for Staff Working with Under 18s and the Child Protection Policy
- Ensure appropriate staff receive a copy of the OSCARS Child Protection Policy
- Brief all managers to run local induction sessions for all staff employed at centres on OSCARS Code of Conduct for Staff working with Under 18s and the Child Protection Policy
- Make sure a copy of the Child Protection Policy is available for all staff to consult
- Address awareness of child protection issues through on-going training at staff meetings

1.4 At OSCARS staff inductions the OSCARS senior member of staff (School Manager or Director of Studies) will:

- Brief staff about requirements and responsibilities of their roles
- Explain child protection procedures
- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to uphold the OSCARS Code of Conduct for Staff Working with Under 18s and the Child Protection Policy
- Ensure appropriate staff receive a copy of the OSCARS Child Protection Policy
- Make sure a copy of the Child Protection Policy is available for all staff to consult
- Address awareness of child protection issues through on-going training at staff meetings

2 Staff conduct

All OSCARS staff are expected to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. **The Code of Conduct for Staff Working with Under 18s** below provides clear guidelines for staff and should be adhered to at all times.

OSCARS Code of Conduct for Staff Working with Under 18s

Students under 18

The OSCARS Code of Conduct is in place to protect students under 18 in our care. It equally provides protection for OSCARS staff working with under 18s.

The law in England and Wales identifies a child as a person under the age of 18 (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

In Scotland this is also the case under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

Relationships with students

- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times.
- Sexual activity with or directed towards under 18s by an adult in a position of trust is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Do not socialize with students under 18 outside your working hours unless you are on a scheduled activity or work-related mission.
- Report any inadvertent/inappropriate/accidental conduct as soon as possible. Do not put yourself in a compromising position.

Communication with students (including contact with students by phone, text, email, social networking forums and photographic images)

Staff working with children should not

- Establish or seek to establish social contact with under 18s/pupils during **or after** their course.
- Give personal email addresses or personal phone numbers to students under 18.
- Communicate via **email, text, phone, social networking sites, blogs, web pages or instant messaging services** with under-18s.
- Post photos or videos of students under 18 on any social networking sites.
- Distribute (by any means) images or information about students of any age.
- Get personally involved in a student's personal affairs.

Also

- Staff working with children should be aware that their personal web profiles can be viewed by anyone and therefore should be especially cautious about their public web profiles and privacy settings.
- Employees have a duty to report any suspicion or allegation of inappropriate contact with children to line/senior managers.
- Non-compliance with the policy on contact with students under 18 will result in disciplinary procedures.

Physical contact with students

- Staff should avoid all unnecessary physical contact with under 18s at all times.
- On rare occasions staff may need to use physical intervention to control or restrain pupils to prevent them from injuring themselves or others, however physical intervention must only be used as a **last resort**.
- In the event that a child is hurt, injured or upset; staff are encouraged to act with caution and to exercise common sense when deciding on their course of action. Whilst the Care Commission have advised that there is currently no legislation in place which forbids a member of staff from consoling a child (e.g. putting an arm around the shoulder of an upset child) or assisting a child who has hurt themselves (e.g. cut their knee), it is expected that the member of staff will act professionally in all circumstances.
- OSCARS strongly advise all staff to always ensure that a second staff member/ colleague is present when dealing with an injured or upset child. Such policies exist to protect the interests of both our staff and clients.
- In the case of a medical emergency, the appointed first-aider should be contacted.
- In the case of demonstrating something that involves touching a student (i.e. sports), tell the student exactly what you are going to do before you demonstrate.

Transporting under 18s

- If you are accompanying under 18s by car, try to make sure another person is with you. If this is not possible, make sure the child is seated in the back of the car.

Privacy

- Never put yourself in a position where you will be alone with an under 18. Make sure someone else is present. If you need to talk to a student privately, use a quiet corner of a public space (e.g. refectory, common room)
- Never enter students' accommodation on your own.

Alcohol and drugs

- No alcohol or drugs are permitted on campus. Never consume alcohol with under 18s or buy alcohol for them.

Appropriate language

- Never swear in front of students.
- Teachers should not teach swear words in class.
- Challenge inappropriate language from students.
- Select suitable topics when teaching under 18s. If in doubt, seek advice.
- Ensure that any films or material shown to children and young people are age appropriate
- The use of inappropriate language whilst on duty, is not acceptable and in the most serious of cases may lead to disciplinary action

Equality

- OSCARS respects everybody irrespective of age, gender, nationality, race, religion and sexual orientation. Please demonstrate cultural sensitivity and awareness.

Whistle blowing (the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion).

- Staff must report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern regarding under 18s regardless of the source and understand that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Staff proven to be in non-compliance of the code of conduct may face disciplinary procedures

3 Bullying



We recognise that bullying is an international problem and we aim to take steps to prevent the incidence of bullying in our centres. OSCARS does not tolerate bullying in any form.

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour. It is repeated and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying:

- **Physical;** hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- **Verbal;** name-calling, insulting, racist remarks
- **Indirect/emotional;** spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups

3.1 Profile of a bully

They are often attention seekers. They will establish their power base by testing the response of the less powerful members of the group, watching how they react when small things happen.

They find out how the Oscar'/staff member reacts to minor transgressions of the rules and wait to see if the 'victim' will complain. It is important that staff are vigilant and consistent.

They bully because they believe they are popular and have the support of the others.

They keep bullying because they incorrectly think the behaviour is exciting and makes them popular.

3.2 Signs of bullying - Profile of a victim

They often have poor social skills

They lack the confidence to seek help

They don't have the support of the Oscarsstaff member or classmates who may find them unappealing

They blame themselves and think it's their own fault

They are desperate to 'fit in'

It is unlikely that they will seek help

3.3 What can we do to prevent bullying?

The students' environment must be free from ridicule, harassment and isolation

Make sure students' possessions are not stolen from classrooms/bedrooms

Make sure learning and activities take place in a supportive environment

Encourage the 'telling of tales'

Ensure students can report bad behaviour without fear of retribution

Notice when a student is isolated and sad

Ensure basic codes of behaviour are enforced *

Don't encourage the victim to ignore it or hit back

Take action immediately if bullying is suspected – **tell your line manager**

3.4 Taking action against bullies

Isolate the bully and inform the staff member for child protection

Ensure they know why they are being excluded

Tell the bully to reflect on why he/she is being excluded

Tell them to write a letter home explaining why they have been isolated

Provide a safe place for the victim and ensure a senior staff member is available to listen

Concentrate on the immediate problem

Ask peers to help the victim

Ensure the Group Leader is aware of the problem and gives support to the victim and any action you have taken

If bullying persists or there is a case of physical assault, report it to Edward Carden at Head Office who will advise you on what subsequent action to take.

(* See 'Bullying Notice' for classroom display)

4 What is Abuse?

Child Abuse

A term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults, harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death. (NSPCC 1999)

Awareness of Actual or Likely Abuse

Cases of abuse may become apparent in a number of ways:

- A child may tell someone they are being abused
- Someone else may disclose that a child has told them, or they believe a child is or has been abused
- A child may show signs of physical injury with no satisfactory explanation for its cause
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely he or she is being abused (like being emotionally withdrawn or aggressive or showing sudden changes in behaviour or performance)
- A member of staff's behaviour or way he/she relates to a child causes concern

Responsibility to Report Disclose of Abuse or Allegation of Abuse

- It is the duty of OSCARS staff to report disclosure of abuse.
- It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true.
- All suspicions or allegations of abuse must be taken seriously.

In whatever way the actual or suspected abuse has become apparent it must be responded to in the correct manner as outlined in the following procedures.

5 Child Protection Procedures

OSCARS staff will follow the procedures set out below:

- Ensure that all staff know the name of the local staff member responsible for child protection
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility to refer any concerns to the staff member responsible for child protection
- Remember that staff are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred
- Be aware of relevant local agencies and co-operate as required regarding child protection matters arising (see 'Local Safeguarding Children Boards' list of contacts)
- Keep written records of concerns about children and ensure they are kept securely
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or other adult

What To Do	What <u>Not</u> To Do
<p>Stay calm.</p> <p>Listen, hear and believe.</p> <p>Give the child time to say what they want to say.</p> <p>Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling.</p> <p>Explain that only people whose job it is to deal with these situations will be informed.</p> <p>Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy.</p> <p>Record in writing what was said as accurately as possible and as soon as possible.</p> <p>Report to the Child Protection Officer at your Centre, School or OSCARS Head Office. Report to your Local Homestay Organiser if the suspicion or disclosure involves a homestay host or other adult in the home.</p> <p>Record your report.</p>	<p>Don't panic. Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the child is in immediate danger.</p> <p>Don't probe for more information. Questioning the child may affect how the child's disclosure is received later.</p> <p>Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations.</p> <p>Don't promise confidentiality, to keep secrets or say that everything will be OK. (It might not.)</p> <p>Don't try to deal with it yourself.</p> <p>Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser.</p> <p>Don't 'gossip' with colleagues about what has been said to you.</p> <p>Don't make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.</p>

In all instances of suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse head office **MUST** be informed immediately.

7 Reporting Suspected, Alleged, or Actual Incidents of Abuse

The welfare of the child must be paramount and you have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff at your centre/school, who will then take the appropriate course of action as detailed here.

- **In the first instance, the designated member of staff must report to the Child Protection Officer at head office, Edward Carden, UK Operations Coordinator. If you are unable to reach him, report to Aidan O Shea, Academic Manager.**
- **If the suspicion, allegation or actual incident involves a homestay host or other adult in the home, you should report via the same mechanisms outlined above.**

Once your initial report has been made the designated member of staff may be instructed to consult with the relevant statutory safeguarding agency (please see ‘Local Safeguarding Children Boards – OSCARS Summer Centres’)

The following information may be required:

- Staff name, address, telephone number, position/role at OSCARS
- As many details as possible about the child, e.g. name, date of birth, address (centre/homestay address, home country address), passport/identity card number, group leader name and telephone number.
- What the reasons are for telephoning, e.g. the suspicions, allegations, what has been said, details of times and dates, the child’s emotional state. Make it clear what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay.
- What has been done so far.
- Where possible confirm this in writing within 24 hours and record the name of the contact who took the referral.

The statutory agency will then give you instructions as to what to do next and will take responsibility for any further action. Keep head office informed at all times of any developments.

Thank you for taking the time to read this policy. Please keep it in a place where you can refer to it easily.