

# SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## *Introduction for Parents*

The safety and welfare of our students is our highest priority at Copperfield Verbiér. The following is an outline of our safeguarding policy.

The law defines someone as a child until they are eighteen years old. A core part of the school's purpose is to protect children from mistreatment; preventing damage to their health and development; being proactive in ensuring that all children have the best outcomes possible. Our approach at Copperfield is child-centric - our actions as a school and staff are always focused on what is best for the children. We are also dedicated to ensuring that our safeguarding is universal - all children have the right to be protected from abuse regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion.

Abuse can take place in many different environments, whether from within the family, at school, or from external influences.

The Pastoral Deputy Head (also referred to as the Safeguarding Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)) is responsible for dealing with concerns about child welfare. If a parent has any concerns regarding the welfare of their children or another child, these should be directed to this person.

## *What you need to know about safeguarding and child protection*

### 1. Definitions

#### 1.1 Safeguarding is:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care



- Taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes

### 1.2 Child Protection is:

- The action required to protect a child from a situation that is causing significant harm, or that is likely to do so.

## 2. Safeguarding and Child Protection - Aims and Objectives

The School is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and to the prevention of child abuse in any form. We are dedicated to educating and supporting students, parents and teachers in ways that develop protective behaviours, and to working with all members of the school community to help them recognize signs of abuse and give appropriate support where necessary.

Protecting the welfare of the students is the role of every adult who has contact with school students. All faculty and staff employed at the School are required to report suspected incidences of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head. Serious concerns include a child in immediate danger and a situation which could involve external agencies or the authorities.

Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy and with Swiss law, regardless of cultural interpretation. In addition, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Switzerland, and/or to the appropriate child protection agency.

We have three primary responsibilities as a school:

Safeguarding	Protecting	Supporting
Proactive measures that prevent harm	Report and record all child protection concerns	Support students and adults when child protection and safeguarding incidents occur

## 2.1 Safeguarding - how do we fulfil this responsibility?

- Ensuring the recruitment of individuals who are suitable and appropriate to work with children who have positive safeguarding attitudes.
- Providing age appropriate lessons to help students understand personal safety needs and rights and to identify, reduce and manage risks. For instance, this will include lessons about the safe and appropriate use of electronic equipment and behaviour in the virtual world.
- Ensuring that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material through embedding a whole school approach towards online safety, including the acceptable use of mobile technology and the use of appropriate filters and monitoring systems.
- Providing parent materials and information sessions to help parents better understand their role and responsibilities around safeguarding and child protection.
- All Safeguarding efforts will be documented including appropriate signatures

## 2.2 Protecting and Supporting

- Ensuring that all employees are properly trained, supported and supervised to enable them to identify abuse and welfare concerns and deal with such concerns appropriately and sensitively.
- Providing a positive School atmosphere where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk.
- Encouraging staff to discuss child protection, safeguarding and welfare concerns confidentially with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in order to ensure they have confidence in their own abilities to identify and appropriately handle welfare concerns and cases of abuse and neglect.
- Ensuring a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which any concerns about the conduct of staff, visitors and other adults in School will be shared and dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

## 3. Commitment to Safeguarding - Adults Working with Children

### 3.1 Recruiting

The School Administrators will adhere to [CIS Safer Recruiting Practices](#) when hiring all faculty and staff, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy placed on the employment pages of the website
- Appropriate criminal background checks for employees (current and home country minimum)
- Verbal reference checks, including current employer
- Declarations as part of the School application form
- Child protection questions as part of interviews
- A safeguarding induction will be provided for all new employees, including
- appropriate training and recorded understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures and Staff Code of Conduct.

### 3.2 Third Party Providers

Third party providers must provide evidence of:

- Criminal Background Checks for all adults working with children
- Child Protection Policies (as appropriate)
- Checked annually by the school

### 3.3 Volunteers

- For all volunteers who have regular access to small groups / individual children a criminal background check must be completed (e.g. Library Assistants, Reading volunteers)
- All volunteers who have regular access to small groups / individual children must be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct
- Field Trips - Where a trip is not chaperoned by a School employee, volunteers must have a criminal background check completed and must understand the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, School Field Trip Risk Management and Code of Conduct.

#### 4. Commitment to Safeguarding - Preventative Education

##### 4.1 Faculty & Staff Training

DSL will run annual training sessions, appropriate to role, for all employees with regards:

- The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- The Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Awareness and Scenario based training around safeguarding and child protection

##### 4.2 Parent Education

The following will be accessible on the Copperfield website:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Guidelines for appropriate use of technology for their children

##### Parents

Parent sessions will be members of the pastoral committee with regards to

- Safeguarding issues, including
  - Safeguarding in the virtual world
  - Stress and transition
  - Reminding parents of positive parent techniques

##### Parent/ Teacher discussions

- IF: a teacher is concerned about a student in terms of basic parenting skills within the family, which relate to higher risk factors for child abuse: unrealistic expectations of their child, harsh discipline procedures, child is suffering from stress
- THEN: that teacher should report to a DSL, who will meet with the parent and respond in an appropriate and proportionate manner



### 4.3 Students and an Age Appropriate Curriculum

- Themes raised in the child protection policy are integrated into the curriculum at all levels in age-appropriate ways. The Pastoral Deputy Head to be involved in coordinating themes across the School and also to work with individual classes and groups as needed.
- Students taught language for protecting their rights from an early age, e.g. ‘I don’t like it when you’
- Role play that highlights children’s rights and protective behaviours, and generates discussion about these.
- Education on group dynamics and the roles individuals play in bullying situations, teaching students how to develop a culture of no tolerance to bullying, e.g. Responsive Classroom in Primary section
- Lifestyle education, particularly regarding drugs, alcohol and the internet.
- Visiting speakers, e.g. local Police Youth Officer
- Mentoring of students perceived to be at risk
- All curriculum will be documented appropriately and is the responsibility of the curriculum leaders in the school
- The school will clarify expectations related to bystanders, and provide opportunities for students to learn disclosure strategies.

What do you need to understand?

### 5. Information about and indicators of abuse and neglect

All members of the school community have a duty to report concerns in the following situations:

<p>Neglect: The neglect of a child that results in the impairment of the child’s current or potential health and development. This includes students being left at home when both parents are away from home without the College being notified of contact details of an approved guardian.</p>	<p>Physical abuse: Injury to a child where there is reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.</p>
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<p>Sexual abuse: An act of a person (adult or child) who forces, coerces or threatens a child to have any form of sexual contact or to engage in any type of sexual activity at the perpetrator's direction.</p>	<p>Emotional abuse: An act of a person (adult or child) including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.</p>
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Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviours, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the needs of the more powerful person, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definitions that are based on understanding the impact of certain behaviours.

<p>Physical indicators:</p>	<p>Behavioural signs:</p>
<p>Physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unexplained cuts, abrasions, bruising or swelling</li> <li>● Unexplained burns or scalds, cigarette burns</li> <li>● Rope burns or marks on arms, legs, neck, torso</li> <li>● Unexplained fractures, strains or sprains, dislocation of limbs</li> <li>● Bite marks</li> <li>● Dental injuries</li> <li>● Ear or eye injuries</li> </ul>	<p>Physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoidance of particular staff, fear of a particular person</li> <li>● Sleep disturbances</li> <li>● Changes in behaviour (e.g. unusual mood swings, uncharacteristic aggression)</li> <li>● Changes in daily routine, changes in appetite</li> <li>● Unusual passivity, withdrawal</li> <li>● Self-harm, suicide attempts</li> <li>● Inappropriate explanations of how injuries occurred</li> <li>● Excessive compliance to staff</li> </ul>
<p>Sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Direct or indirect disclosure of abuse or assault</li> <li>● Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs</li> <li>● Difficulty walking or sitting</li> </ul>	<p>Sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sleep disturbances</li> <li>● Changes in eating patterns</li> <li>● Inappropriate or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge</li> <li>● Changes in social patterns</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Pain or itching in genital and/or anal area; bruising, bleeding or discharge</li><li>● Self-harm, abuse, suicide attempts</li><li>● Torn, stained or blood-stained underwear or bedclothes</li><li>● Sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy</li><li>● Unexplained money or gifts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sudden or marked changes in behaviour or temperament</li><li>● Anxiety attacks, panic attacks, clinical depression</li><li>● Refusal to attend usual places (e.g. work, school, respite)</li><li>● Going to bed fully clothed</li><li>● Excessive compliance to staff</li></ul>
<p>Emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Speech disorders</li><li>● In the case of a child, lags in physical development, failure to thrive</li><li>● Injuries sustained from self-harm or abuse</li><li>● Suicide attempts</li><li>● Anxiety attacks</li></ul>	<p>Emotional abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Self-harm or self-abusive behaviours</li><li>● Challenging/extreme behaviours</li><li>● Excessive compliance to staff</li><li>● Very low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness</li><li>● Clinical depression</li><li>● Marked decrease in interpersonal skills</li><li>● Extreme attention-seeking behaviour</li></ul>
<p>Neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Physical wasting, unhealthy weight levels</li><li>● Poor dental health</li><li>● Food from meals left on face and/or clothes throughout the day</li><li>● Dirty, unwashed body and/or face, body odour</li><li>● Person always wearing the same clothes</li><li>● Ill-fitting and/or unwashed clothes</li><li>● Child is always over- or underdressed for the weather conditions</li><li>● Food is consistently poor quality, insufficient, inedible and/or unappetising</li></ul>	<p>Neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Constant tiredness</li><li>● Persistent hunger</li><li>● Unexpectedly poor social/interpersonal skills</li><li>● Signs of loss of communication and other skills</li><li>● Staff member, service provider, carer or support person consistently fails to bring the child to appointments, events or activities.</li><li>● The child is persistent denied opportunities to socialise with others in the community</li></ul>

### 5.1 Physical Abuse is:

- Inflicting physical injury on a child by other than accidental means, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death
- Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
- Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances of extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering
- Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy
- Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
- Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above

### 5.2 Emotional Abuse is:

- A pattern of intentional verbal or behavioral actions or lack of actions that convey to a child the message that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value to meet someone else's needs.

### 5.3 Neglect is:

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs within their own environment.
- Physical e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision - this would include failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time. Should parents/guardians leave the home/country for any reason the responsibility for informing the School of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary changes of guardian forms are available from the School. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country.
- Medical e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment.
- Emotional e.g., a pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs.

#### 5.4 Sexual Abuse is\*:

- Committing or allowing sexual offense to be committed against a child as defined in either the criminal code of the host county or School policy, or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.
- Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes:
  - sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
  - using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
  - forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
  - making a child undress or touch someone else.
- Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative. Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:
  - exposing or flashing
  - showing pornography
  - exposing a child to sexual acts
  - making them masturbate
  - forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
  - making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
  - forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

\*Definition taken from NSPCC website - can be found at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/#>

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious. The planning, referred to as Grooming (see 5.5 below), which results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behaviour of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report. Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and

well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved. Investigating sexual abuse or grooming requires the involvement of the local authorities or the engagement of independent safeguarding consultants. Such investigations are not a role to be undertaken by the School's safeguarding team without external support.

## 5.5 Grooming - Understanding the Perpetrators

In the context of child protection, the term "Grooming" refers to:

- A deliberate process undertaken by a child predator to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Behaviour should only be seen as grooming where there is evidence of a pattern of conduct that is consistent with grooming the alleged victim for sexual activity and that there is no other reasonable explanation for it.

Grooming is where an adult communicates, by word or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

Groomers are 'master-manipulators'. Grooming behavior can also be targeted towards the parent, carer or other person who has a supervisory role towards the child with the intention of garnering the carer's trust to facilitate access to the child. Grooming of children can also happen online using a masked identity.

What sort of behaviour may constitute grooming?

The types of behaviours that may lead to such a conclusion include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Persuading a child or group of children that they have a 'special' relationship, for example by:
  - Spending inappropriate special time with a child.
  - Inappropriately giving gifts.



- Inappropriately showing special favours to one child but not to other children.
- Inappropriately allowing the child to overstep rules.
- Asking the child to keep this relationship to themselves.
- Initiating and maintaining a 1:1 online personal relationship with a child
- Testing boundaries, for example by -
  - Undressing in front of a child.
  - Encouraging inappropriate physical contact (even where it is not overtly sexual).
  - Talking about sex.
  - 'Accidental' intimate touching.
- Inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work (except where it may be appropriate - for example, where there was a pre-existing friendship with the child's family or as part of normal social interactions in the community).
- Inappropriate personal communication (including emails, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and web forums) that explores intimate personal or sexual feelings with a child.
- An adult requesting that a child keep any aspect of their relationship secret or using tactics to keep any aspect of the relationship secret, would generally increase the likelihood that grooming is occurring.

## 5.6 Peer on Peer Abuse

All school employees should be aware that:

- Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse
- That children are capable of abusing their peers

Such abuse should never be tolerated or normalised. This is most likely to include but is not limited to bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence, grooming, inappropriate or harmful sexualised play (younger children), sexual assaults, sexting and gender issues within groups of girls and boys. If an adult thinks for whatever reason that a student may pose a risk of harm to himself / herself or to others the adult should report their concern to the DSL as soon as possible. Should an allegation of abuse be made against another child, all children involved (whether perpetrator or victim) will be treated as being "at risk". Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the allegation will be

referred to Canton Valais Education Service and / or police, as appropriate. The concern may indicate that one or more of the pupils concerned may be in need of additional support by local support agencies. See Section 6.0 on reporting concerns.

## 5.7 Sexting

Sexting is where they share inappropriate or explicit images/messages online or through mobile phones. 'Sexting' has become an increasingly common activity among students. It is often seen as flirting by children and young people who feel that it's a part of normal life. It is seen as a social norm by some students. 'Sexting' can leave young people vulnerable to blackmail, bullying, unwanted attention and emotional distress. 'Sexting' is illegal. By sending an explicit image/message, a young person is producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission. The School will ensure that the risks associated with this issue are discussed with children on a regular basis as part of the curriculum around responsible use of technology. When the School becomes aware of 'Sexting' that has occurred and involves a child or children from the School, parents and relevant authorities will be notified and appropriate steps are taken.

## 5.8 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

All school employees need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present (see below) it could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Faculty/staff should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Indicators of FGM:

- a family arranging a long break abroad during the summer holidays.
- unexpected, repeated or prolonged absence from School.
- academic work suffering.
- have difficulty walking, standing or sitting.
- spend longer in the bathroom or toilet.



- appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed.
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from School.
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations.
- ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

What do you need to be able to do?

## 6. Reporting Concerns

All school employees have a duty to:

- Report all safeguarding concerns
  - All low level concerns or 'nagging doubts' should be shared with the DSL
  - Allegations of high level concerns should be referred directly to the DSL
  - Allegations of high level concerns about another employee or adult in School should be referred to the Head.
- Record all child protection concerns
- Maintain confidentiality - 'need to know basis'

Levels of concern primarily focus on the need for confidentiality rather than the severity of the incident

- Level 1 - A concern about behaviour which is a breach of a handbook, policy, or code of conduct which could put adults and/or children in a vulnerable position
- Level 2 - An escalated concern or an allegation of repeated inappropriate behaviour, or behaviour which puts children in a position of significant or immediate danger. A level 2 concern would involve external agencies and / or sensitive information about members of the community.
- Level 3 - All concerns raised / allegations made concerning individual school employees, or all concerns raised which involve a criminal investigation

### 6.1 Handling a concern/disclosure

- Receive the information
  - Keep an open mind; do not judge



- Listen to the child - it is not for you to decide what is the 'truth'
- Reassure the child
  - Have regard for their welfare - make them feel comfortable and reassure them
- React
  - Be patient, even if the child is hesitant; listen to the child - say as little as possible yourself
  - Do not stop a child who is freely disclosing abuse
  - Ask questions only in relation to the disclosure in an open manner to establish exactly what they are saying
- Record and Report
  - Record date, time, place, and exact words used.
  - Pass all information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
  - Do not promise confidentiality
- When reporting and/or handling a concern about a child all employees should act with the utmost discretion and any students who are involved will receive appropriate care and support.
- School employees should always listen to a student/adult who wants to talk about a concern. If a child tells a School employee that they know about or have been a victim of child abuse or neglect the faculty/staff member should:
  - Allow the child to speak freely and remain calm. Do not interrupt the child or be afraid of silences.
  - Provide reassuring nods and words such as, "I am so sorry this has happened", "You are doing the right thing in talking to me".
  - Avoid saying things like, "I wish you had told me about this earlier" or "I cannot believe what I am hearing".
  - Limit questioning to the minimum necessary for clarification and avoid leading questions such as, "Has this happened to your siblings?"
  - At an appropriate time tell the child that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people. Promises of confidentiality should not be given (see Confidentiality section below).
- Tell the child what will happen next.
- Seek support if they feel distressed.

## 6.2 Confidentiality

School employees should never guarantee confidentiality to children or adults wishing to tell them about something serious as this may ultimately not be in the best interests

of the child. They should remain judgement free. They should guarantee that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know and that they will pass on information in confidence only to the people who must be told in order to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. All School employees involved will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informant from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that may occur after a disclosure has been made.

### 6.3 Whistle Blowing

All adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of children. If an employee believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that practice may put students at risk, they should in the first instance report their concern to the Head. If their concern relates to the Head, they should report their concern to the Safeguarding Director.

No employee will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, provided that they do so in good faith and following the whistleblowing procedures. Also, no employee, or student, may be harassed for “whistleblowing” or in any way subjected to personal or other disadvantages.

Complaints or reports made with malicious, slanderous or abusive intent, without any basis in fact, are exempt from this rule. Abuse of the right to lodge complaints or of the reporting channel will result in disciplinary measures including sanctions, warnings, termination without notice or expulsion.

### 6.5 Key Personnel for Safeguarding & Child Protection (contact details will be provided to parents upon enrolment)

Headteacher	Dr Hugh McCormick
Pastoral Deputy Head (also referred to as the Safeguarding Director/ DSL)	Mr Leonardo Ackerman
Chair of the Board of Directors	Mr John Porter



## 7. Dealing with an Allegation / Reported Concern - Guidelines for DSL

### 7.1 Procedures for Emergency Situations

#### IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED IF:

- EITHER a child is thought to be in immediate or imminent danger: a representative from the pastoral team to inform the appropriate organisation (Psychiatric Service, Police - Phone 117) and the DSL / Head
- OR a child has physical injuries caused by the suspected abuse: the student must be taken to the hospital

The Canton Valais Education Service must be informed.

### 7.2 Procedures for Non-emergency Situations

The teacher suspects that a child may have suffered or is suffering abuse, but there is nothing to indicate the child is in immediate danger, an internal inquiry will follow.

#### Observe

- Keep close observation and make written records of relevant incidents/communication made
- Do not contact the suspected offenders
- Build relationship of trust with the student to follow up the concerns
- Work with parents unless they are the suspected abuser

#### Seek Advice / Initiate Internal Inquiry

- Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Continue to gather information
- Contact outside advice agencies
- Monitor the wellbeing of the student and provide appropriate support

#### Decide

1. *There is insufficient grounds for concern*

In this instance, the school will work with the student, teacher and family to support needs.

2. *There is reasonable cause for concern.*

In this instance, the school will do one of the following.

- a) Contact the appropriate agencies and register the concern
- b) Initiate an independent safeguarding investigation

3. *There are grounds to make a criminal complaint:*

The school will contact the police, meanwhile providing support to the child and their family.

### 7.3 Decision Making

If there is evidence of physical harm caused by suspected abuse, the student may be taken to medical centre or hospital for examination. The Canton Valais Education Service and police will be informed as appropriate.

- If it is felt that the student is in immediate or imminent danger, or a criminal offence has been committed, the police will be contacted and the KESB will be informed.
- If there is deemed to be insufficient evidence to warrant immediate action, the appropriate agency may be contacted for advice, and a period of observation and assessment will follow, leading to one of three conclusions highlighted above.

Decision 1:

There are insufficient grounds to have reasonable cause for concern. This conclusion may follow circumstances relating to:

- Student relations with peers

- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving

The school counselor will work with the parents and teacher and will coordinate a programme to support the child. This may involve external support services.

Decisions 2 & 3:

There are reasonable grounds for concern of child abuse or neglect, or suspicion of a criminal offence; or in case of an emergency:

The School will follow advice from the Canton Valais Education Service and, where appropriate, the police. Parents will be contacted if they are not the suspected abusers. If they are suspected of child abuse, advice will be taken from the Canton Valais Education Service.

Where appropriate, the School will contact local psychological services to provide support to the student and family. Parental permission is needed for this. An attorney will be consulted if it is deemed necessary.

Further notifications:

In addition to following advice and procedures given by the Canton Valais Education Service, and where necessary, the police, the School may notify:

- The management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- The consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Child Protection Agencies in the home country.

#### 7.4 Conducting an Independent Safeguarding Investigation of an Employee

If it is suspected that an employee of the School has abused a child the concern must be brought directly to the Head, the case will be treated with the utmost gravity, and a full safeguarding investigation will follow.

### Safeguarding Teams.

- The School may engage the services of an independent safeguarding consultant to carry out a Suitability Assessment.
- This assessment is not to determine innocence/guilt but to assess the suitability of the person to work with children.
- All communication during in, and subsequent to, will be in line with Swiss Privacy and Swiss Labour Laws.
- The School will develop a communication plan and welfare plan appropriate to the situation and with the advice of external authorities.

### 7.5 Further Support for the Child and Family

- The Pastoral Deputy Head will maintain follow up contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The Pastoral Deputy Head will meet with the child's teachers (if appropriate) and the Head to provide in-service training regarding the needs of abused or neglected children and the important role teachers play in assisting the child's recovery and future development.
- The Pastoral Deputy Head will provide resource materials and strategies for teachers' use.
- The Pastoral Deputy Head will maintain contact with outside therapists and investigators to update the situation of the child in School.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's School's Confidential Records file. Records sent to schools to which a student may transfer will only flag a confidential file for the child with prior parental consent. The School will only share information as appropriate to protect the child, in line with Swiss privacy laws.

## 8. Contact Details for Local Authorities & Support Services

### 8.1 Overview of Organisations

**Canton Valais Education Service** – This is the local education authority. If there is reasonable concern that a child is being abused, the suspicions are reported to the Canton Valais Education Service:

COPPERFIELD VERBIÉR, RUE DE LA BÉRARDE 10  
LE HAMEAU, VERBIÉR 1936  
SWITZERLAND

Child Protection Group - *Kinderschutzgruppen*: - This is a helpline which will give advice to schools when they have a concern about child abuse. Phone calls may be made anonymously.

Youth and Family advisory service - *Jugend- und Familienberatung* - This provides free legal advice and counselling to families, and is provided by the Gemeinde where the student lives. It may also be given legal guardianship over the student.

## 8.2 KESB *Kinder und Erwachsenenschutzbehörden*

In January 2013 a new child protection law came into force in Switzerland (*Kinder- und Erwachsenenschutzrecht*), creating new regional Child and Adult protection authorities *Kinder- und Erwachsenenschutzbehörden* KESB.

Under this law, if there is a suspicion of child abuse, the School should contact the KESB in the town/city where the student lives and send them a Child Welfare Notification to register the concern.

<https://www.vs.ch/de/web/sjsj/autorites-de-protection-de-l-enfant-et-de-l-adulte1>

By law, anybody who is worried about a child has the right to refer them to the KESB. This means that if a member of staff feels their concerns about suspected child abuse have not been taken seriously by the School, they have the right to refer the case to the KESB themselves. In this instance, the member of staff should both speak to the Head in person and inform the Head in writing of their decision to contact the KESB before doing so.

- Those in public service in the Swiss state system, including teachers, are obligated to report any reasonable concerns about child abuse to the KESB authorities. As a private institution, we may report concerns but are not required to do so.
- KESB groups will be composed of a lawyer, social worker and psychologist
- Canton Valais: The committee will make decisions and prepare for the next steps – this will be ordered by law.
- Swiss law: You have the right to report but no obligation to report
- Reports can be made anonymously
- The process of filing a report with a concern for abuse
  - Work with parents before making a claim



**COPPERFIELD**  
VERBIÉR

- Teachers are obligated to report suspected abuse to the Dean/Designate to file the report
- By law, we are allowed to say we suspect abuse to the authorities but we do not have to say if we are in personal engagement with the family and working with them.