

**Invictus International School  
Bukit Timah Campus  
Safeguarding and Child  
Protection Policy  
(Including e-safety)**



Effective Date		Aug 24
SLT Approval		Aug 24
Review Date		Jun 25

## **Introduction and Context**

Invictus International School Singapore, Bukit Timah Campus (hereafter, Invictus Bukit Timah) ensures that students are supported and empowered to achieve their academic and personal potential. The foundation for enabling this to be realised is our strong commitment to ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding and our active promotion of the welfare of children and young people. Safeguarding is a key component of the ethos of the school and there are high expectations placed on all stakeholders.

Invictus Bukit Timah fully recognises the moral and statutory responsibility in Singapore as well as meeting benchmarked international standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure they receive effective support, protection and justice. These procedures are aligned with those of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC). Central to this is the acknowledgement that every child has basic fundamental rights. These include the right to:

- **life, survival and development**
- **protection from violence, abuse or neglect**
- an **education** that enables children to **fulfil their potential**
- be **raised by**, or have a **relationship with, their parents**
- **express their opinions** and be **listened to**.

As an International School, we have also adopted, where appropriate, the UK standards based around the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) documentation.

Therefore, the welfare of the child is paramount:

- All children undertaking school sponsored activities, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All members of staff have equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- Children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

This document outlines the various procedures we have implemented to make sure every child remains safe and happy. It applies to staff, volunteers and contractors working with pupils on school premises or away from the school on an activity, visit or other educational pursuit.

## **What is Safeguarding?**

**Safeguarding** and **promoting the welfare of children** refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

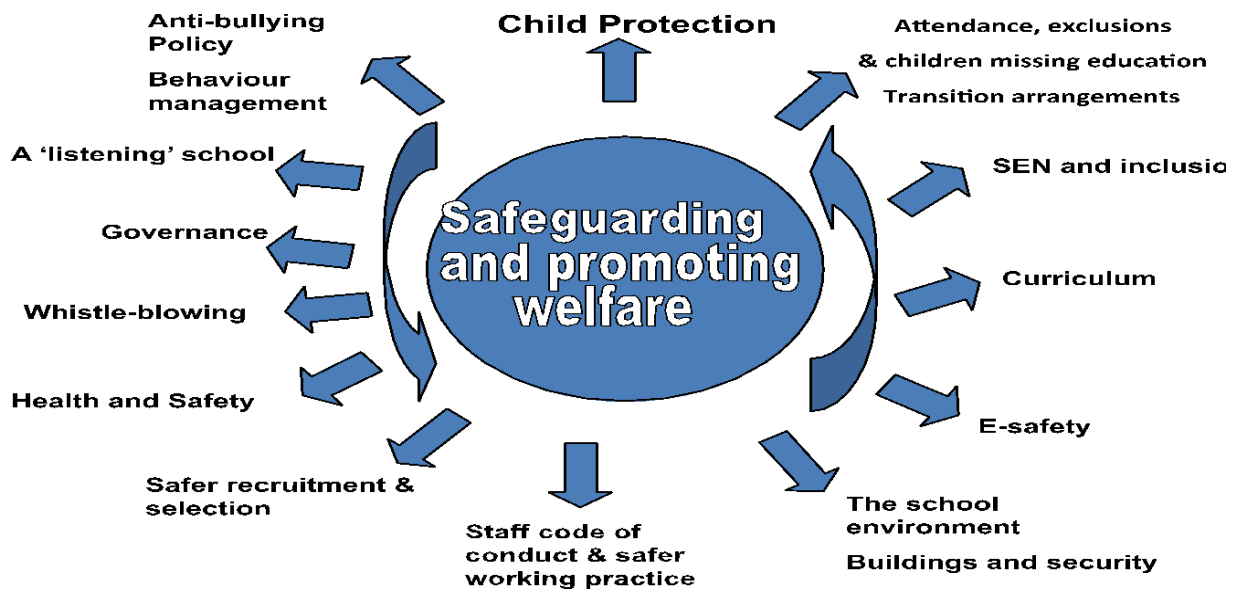
**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Members of **staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, including contracted staff, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18. However, our duty to promote the welfare and health and safety applies to all students in our care whether they are under or over the age of 18 and for school policy purposes will be classified as a “child”.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a legal parenting role, for example step-parents, guardians, foster carers and adoptive parents.

### Safeguarding at Invictus Bukit Timah



This includes:

- ensuring pupil health and safety
- referring concerns or allegations about a child to the appropriate bodies promptly
- bullying
- all forms of abuse
- harassment and discrimination
- use of physical intervention
- meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- drug and substance misuse
- educational visits
- internet / e-safety

- issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity
- school security

### **Responsibilities**

Child abuse occurs in all communities regardless of the gender of the child or perpetrator, wealth, religion, culture or ethnicity. Schools as institutions working with children and young people become more attractive to those who wish to exploit or abuse children. All members of the school community have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The school uses the online “My Concern” system to record all Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns.

### **The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

The SLT is responsible for formulating and implementing policy and procedures which:

- Prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people i.e. Safe recruitment procedures and single central vetting records.
- Promote safe practices and challenge poor and unsafe practices in the whole school context.
- Identify and support the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member or is appointed by the SLT.
- Identify instances where there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare and initiate appropriate action/intervention to keep them safe.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.

### **Designated Safeguarding Team**

- DSL – Craig Cooper (Principal)
- Deputy DSL (DDSL) - Andrew Morse (Deputy Principal)

The DSL is responsible for the school's approach to:

- Ensuring that all staff know who is responsible for child protection issues.
- Maintaining staff awareness and confidence regarding child protection procedures and ensuring new staff are aware of these procedures and coordinate training in this respect.
- Coordinating action where child abuse is suspected.
- Attending case conferences or nominate a DDSL / appropriate other staff to attend on his/her behalf.
- Ensuring the updating of My Concern and that the information held is restricted to a

'need to know basis'.

- Keeping up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities at the highest level.

## **All Staff**

All staff have a shared responsibility to help keep children and young people safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people.
- Identifying young people who are suffering or who are at significant risk of harm.
- Taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure that children are kept safe both at home and at school.
- Understanding and implementing fully school policy and procedures related to child protection and safeguarding
- Attending and contributing to professional training and awareness of Child Protection issues.

## **Human Resources Department in relation to Safer Recruitment**

- Ensure the organisation has effective policies and procedures in place for the “safer recruitment” of all staff and in accordance with recognised international norms and both local guidance / legal requirements (and monitor the school's compliance with them).
- Keep and maintain a single central record (SCR) of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Assess clearance and vetting documentation provided by contractors and agencies working at school.

## **Categories of Child Abuse and their Signs/Symptoms**

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm (for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler). Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). Internet abuse is a growing concern and schools should be vigilant to this.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. All staff should be aware that abuse, or safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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.

## **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 psychological state and emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a 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, although it may occur alone.

## **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, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include 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). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Note in Singapore sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 14 year's constitutes the criminal offence of rape, even if the girl gives her consent. When the girl is already 14 years old but not yet 16, the activity is an offence called "carnal connection", provided she has given consent.

## **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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing 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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

This form of abuse may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. The above categories are identified by the NSPCC, and definitions have been taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2018) and current KCSIE

### **Child on Child Abuse**

**All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as 'child on child' or 'peer on peer' abuse).

- Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- threatens and/or encourages physical abuse; sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

All staff should recognise that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child on child abuse they should speak to their DSL or DDSL.

It is essential that **all** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature.

Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);

'upskirting', which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to

engage in sexual activity with a third party; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery); harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues-some of which are listed below:

- bullying including cyber bullying
- children missing education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- hate
- mental health
- missing children and adults strategy
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation
- relationship abuse
- sexting
- trafficking

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as: when an individual or group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond.

Bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episodes or acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through anti-bullying procedures. Heads of Phase will keep records of bullying-type behavior through normal Pastoral reporting system. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the DSL could consider implementing child protection procedures.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:



- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol; or
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL team to decide how to proceed. It is therefore essential that staff report their concerns. Staff do not need 'absolute proof' that a child is at risk but should act on any hunches or worries in the knowledge that they will be supported in their safeguarding role.

### **Child Protection Procedure**

#### **Disclosure of abuse perpetrated outside of school**

If a member of staff suspects a child has been abused or neglected by someone outside of school, the following procedures should be implemented:

- Invictus International School staff will report concerns immediately on the My Concern platform with all the relevant initial information – there may be a need for a further follow up.
- If there is an immediate risk this must be reported in person to the DSL (or DDSL if DSL is unavailable) and then followed up on My Concern
  - An immediate risk would also include a risk of harm were the student to return home after school that day.
- All follow up information / actions must be recorded on My Concern.

In the event of suspected sexual abuse happening, it is a requirement for the school to contact the Child Protection and Service (CPS) or the Police. For cases happening within the context of the family, the family should not be alerted to the allegations being made and the report can either be made with the police or CPS. For sexual abuse cases happening outside the context of

the family, the family should be informed of the incident and a report needs to be made to the CPS/Police. The school should record any disclosure factually

*NB. The 'paramountcy principle' supports agencies making decisions in the best interests of the child and this may mean not disclosing information to parents.*

In the event of other forms of abuse, the DSL will be committed to taking action and in collaboration with the Head of School / Director of Schools from HQ, when deemed appropriate after further investigation, the DSL will inform the Child Protection Service. The DSL will keep the teacher and staff up to date with developments on a need to know basis only – it may be that once raised the staff member raising it will not hear about further developments – this is normal in a “need to know” system.

If there are obvious signs of harm, the student will be taken to the School First Aider immediately. If the student is in need of urgent medical attention, he/she should be taken to either the KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) or to the National University Hospital (NUH), the 2 designated pediatric hospitals. If it is not possible or advisable to obtain parent consent the CPS should be contacted for consultation. Where we suspect the abuse has occurred or is about to occur and the child is unsafe and in imminent risk of further harm, we are committed to reporting the matter to Child Protection Service Helpline at 1800-777 0000 (office hours) or the Police.

Where we suspect that the abuse has been perpetrated by someone close to the family or within the family network, the DSL or a designated member of staff will contact the family and discuss ways on how the student could be kept safe and managed more appropriately. Full consideration as to whether contact with the immediate family would increase the risk of harm should be given.

### **Disclosure of alleged abuse perpetrated by a staff member**

If staff feel that another member of staff has acted inappropriately and has contravened the Safeguarding policy, then they are required to report their concerns to the DSL immediately. Staff may also be implicated by students.

The following procedures will apply in these cases:

- Meeting with Student/Alleged Victim-With the School Principal present, the DSL will communicate with the student/s directly. If there is more than one student who has been a victim of abuse, the students will be interviewed individually. A summary of what was learned from investigations will be made by the DSL.
- The DSL shall coordinate interviews with any bystanders/ witnesses and notes taken.
- Meeting with Accused Staff Member - The accused staff member will be requested to

attend a meeting with the Principal and DSL and questioned regarding the accusations being made. The meeting will be documented. Notes from this meeting will be recorded.

- Contacting Parent/guardian - Parents/Caregivers of the student/s being questioned will be contacted by telephone by the Principal or DSL and informed of the meetings that took place. The alleged victim's parents will be invited into school to discuss the issue face to face.
- Consultation with Directors (HQ) - The Principal and DSL will be committed to taking action and arrange consultation with the Directors from HQ. Consideration will be given as to whether that member of staff should face suspension pending further investigations.
- Communication with Child Protection Agency -The Principal, DSL or Directors may report the matter to Child Protection Services Helpline at 1800 777 0000 (office hours) or the police after careful consideration of seriousness of offense is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also. The Principal/DSL will keep those directly concerned with the case up to date with developments
- Counselling. With permission from parents/caregivers, student victims and suspected staff members will be offered in-school counselling or by an external referral. Off-campus professional counselling contact details will also be offered.

### **Disclosure of Abuse by Another Student**

If a student in the school is suspected of abusing another student, the following steps should all take place within the school day.

- Concern raised on My Concern by the staff member the student reported this to
- Meeting with Victim/s - The DSL / DDSL and/or delegated Teacher will meet with the victim directly. In the case of more than one victim, children will be interviewed individually and a summary of what was learned from investigations placed on MyConcern.
- Meeting with Bystanders - The DSL and/or Class Teacher will communicate with possible witnesses individually to the abuse that has occurred, and make notes.
- Meeting with Accused Student/s - The DSL or Principal or person delegated this role by them depending on the age and maturity of the student will communicate with the student accused of causing abuse to a fellow student or students. If there is more than one student who has taken part in an incident involving the abuse of other students, the students accused will be met with individually. Notes from this meeting will be recorded coordinated by the DSL.
- Consultation - Consultation and agreement between the Principal, and DSL.
- Parents of Accused Student/s Contacted - If abuse by student/s proves to be beyond doubt, the student/s are collected from wherever they are on the school campus and asked to bring their bags to the school office. The parents/guardian of the student/s

accused of abuse towards another student/s will be telephoned to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or DSL before being asked to take their child/children home for the rest of the day. An offer of counselling for their child will be made.

- Parents of Victims Contacted - Parents/guardian of the student/s who was/were abused will be contacted by telephone by the Principal or DSL and informed of the meetings that took place. The course of action will be explained regarding the student/s who/whom carried out the abuse on their child and an offer of counselling for their child made.
- Action - the Principal will be committed to taking action and will inform the Directors at HQ of proportionate responses in accordance with the schools behaviour policy. In extreme cases, expulsions will be considered. Further consequences including an apology letter to victim/s and possible exclusion from upcoming events will be considered.
- Communication with Child Protection Agency - the Principal and/or DPCP may report the matter to Child Protection Service Helpline at 1800 777 0000 (office hours) or the police after careful consideration of seriousness of offence is given. Parents of student victims will be made aware of their right to do this also.

### **Managing Disclosure**

The disclosure of child abuse by a child to an adult is likely to be one of the hardest conversations that all parties will face. It is essential that we show empathy and professionalism in our approach to managing such conversations, mindful that what is said and what is recorded could influence criminal proceedings at a later date.

The following professional guidelines protect both the child and the person who is receiving the disclosure:

- No Promise Of Confidentiality - Staff should never give students or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know.
- Listen Without Judgement - Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning, leading or stopping them. On no account should a pupil be asked to demonstrate the abuse. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a social worker, police officer or other specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- Take Notes - Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the student's own words and ensure this is transferred to My Concern.
- Empathy - Remember that it may be very traumatic for a student to recall and describe events.
- Next Steps - When the student has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.

- Professional - stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.
- Keep notes of any concerns, giving the issues, dates etc..., but be discreet whilst interviewing the child - they may find note taking at the time disconcerting.
- Keep all notes factual.
- Do not read your summary back to the victim as this can repeat the trauma.
- If you have a discussion with a child, keep a record of timing, setting, personnel present, what was said and any action taken/not taken
- Record everything as a concern on My Concern

### **Record Keeping**

MyConcern is the single point to record all information concerning a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse. All notes should be attached to the concern in this system. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, where appropriate, they have put on all information and completed all tasks allocated.

### **Sharing a concern about Staff (Whistleblowing)**

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, as it is against another member of staff / colleague, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Reasons for sharing a concern

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from sharing a concern

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern.

- Any safeguarding concern about another member of staff must be immediately reported to the Principal, if it is about the Principal then the directly to the Head of School.

### **Self-reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children

### **Training**

- All DSL/DDSLs must complete the L1 and L2 Safeguarding training courses as specified by the DSL annually (usually start of the academic year)
- All other permanent staff (academic and non-academic) must complete the L1 Safeguarding training courses as specified by the DSL annually (usually start of the academic year). This includes all non-Bukit Timah based staff who as defined by “KCSE Regulated Activity” are present in the school on a weekly basis.
- All staff involved in recruitment interviews must complete the Safer Recruitment training course as specified by the DSL annually (usually start of the academic year)