



# ELI Schools Safeguarding Policy

## A. Policy Statement

### A1) Context

ELI Schools welcomes both adult (over 18) and non-adult (under 18) overseas students throughout the year to our schools located in Dublin & Drogheda. We recognise that we have a fundamental duty of care to each of these students as they are living away from home and without their normal support networks. We also recognise the additional duty of care for all students who are aged under 18. This safeguarding policy represents our belief that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and it is the responsibility of all adults in contact with young people to safeguard their welfare.

### A2) Terminology

- Safeguarding: caring for children appropriately and protecting them from that which is not in their best interests
- Child Protection: protecting children from abuse
- Abuse: all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power
- Adults: Refers to all adults who are working with the children (including group leaders and homestay hosts)
- Designated Liaison Person: On site member of staff responsible for day to day child welfare concerns and with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding issues in ELI.
- Under 18s (U18): A person aged 17 or less

### A3) U18s' entitlement

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief,
- sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, homestay providers, agencies, leaders and teachers is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### A4) Adults' responsibilities

This Policy applies to all ELI Schools staff including directly employed staff, homestay hosts, accommodation and transport providers, volunteers, interns and anyone working on behalf of ELI Schools. All adults are expected to read and abide by the policy and procedures set out in this document.

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## A5) The purpose of the policy

To provide protection for persons under the age of 18 (U18s) who receive ELI Schools' services.

To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

We seek to safeguard under 18s by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for all adults recruiting staff and homestay providers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with under 18s, their parents and all adults sharing information about concerns with relevant agencies and involving parents and under 18s appropriately;
- providing effective management for all adults through recruitment policies, supervision, support and training.

## A6) Policy review

We ensure that this policy is communicated and understood and that there are sufficient resources available for its implementation. Our policy and procedures are reviewed annually by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and reported to and signed off by the Director of Schools.

## A7) Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities for the implementation of this policy are as follows:

- U18s: Responsible for understanding the policy, looking out for each other and raising any concerns with adults if necessary.
- Adults: Responsible for understanding the policy and pro-actively engaging with its requirements.
- Designated Liaison Person: In ELI Schools there is one Designated Liaison Person, whose role it is to oversee the standards and practices across the group. They are also responsible for the implementation of the policies and procedures and the implementation of all procedures as laid out in this document. Their contact details are made known to all staff.

## A8) Policy Availability & Formats

ELI Schools' safeguarding policy is available to all staff on a shared server drive, and in staff manuals. It is provided to staff with their contract and included in application packs for host families.

## B) Code of Conduct

### B1) Overview

ELI Schools recognise the importance of creating a safe school culture where trust is built between staff and under 18s and both are protected from any behavior which runs contrary to this culture. We achieve this through adherence to the policies laid out in this document and a genuine environment of care fostered by robust procedures and recruitment and training activities.

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## B2) Setting standards

The key elements of our code of conduct are: interaction; appearance; intoxicants; IT and social networks; accommodation and transport. We expect all adults working on behalf of ELI Schools to provide an excellent role model for all students in their care and to cultivate a respectful, safe and secure environment for staff and students.

## B3) Interaction

- Maintain professional physical and relationship boundaries and act in a way appropriate to your Duty of Care.
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about any adult or U18. Inappropriate remarks include innuendo, swearing and discussing their or your own intimate relationships.
- Do not engage in behavior that may be construed as 'grooming' a U18 for example giving money, presents or favours or talking or behaving in an inappropriate or unprofessional manner.
- Insofar as is possible, avoid situations where you are alone with a U18. If you are required to be in a one-to-one setting with a U18, consider how this can be managed effectively i.e. leaving a door open, using a room that has a glass wall, positioning yourself within sight of the door and considering if the one-to-one setting is really necessary. In the case of Drivers, U18s should be seated in the rear of the car, and there should be no detours or unnecessary stops on the journey.
- Conduct all interactions in a calm manner and avoid shouting at U18s wherever this is possible unless there is a Health and Safety risk.
- Ensure physical contact is within clear boundaries to avoid any allegations of inappropriate touching.
- Do not socialise with U18 students outside of school organised events.

*Those providing accommodation should also note the following:*

- Abide by the accommodation rules and guidelines as provided in accommodation guidelines.
- Do not enter the student's bedroom or bathroom when the student is present, without first gaining the student's permission, i.e. knock on door. If there is a need to search the student's bedroom or property this must be carried out with the student present and with their permission.

## B4) Alcohol, drugs and smoking

- Do not consume, or allow U18s to consume any alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or intoxicating substances on school premises.
- Do not provide alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or intoxicating substances to U18s.
- Do not work under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicants or drugs.

## B5) IT and social networks

- Do not share your personal social media details with any under 18s.
- Do not produce or share any images or videos of under 18s on your personal recording equipment.
- Ensure correct parental/guardian permission has been obtained, if producing any images or videos of U18s on school recording equipment, which is to be used for marketing or educational purposes.

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## C) Child Protection

### C1) Overview

We meet our child protection responsibilities by:

- creating policies and procedures to comply with all regulatory requirements and Guidelines;
- reviewing these policies and procedures annually;
- training all staff to an appropriate level of awareness and procedural competence with periodic review;
- communicating of Child Protection guidelines with all our contracted partners (host families & drivers);
- ensuring that all our staff, host families and drivers are Garda vetted.

### C2) Nominated/designated person

ELI Schools has one Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Deirdre Watson in their absence the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is John Doherty.

### C3) How to respond to concerns

Scenarios which may cause an adult to have safeguarding concerns about an U18 are as follows:

- An U18 tells an adult they are worried about the safety of another U18.
- An U18 tells an adult about safety issue that concerns themselves.
- A third party reports a safety issue to ELI Dublin, concerning a U18 in ELI's care.
- An adult witnesses behaviours of another adult which cause concern.
- An adult witnesses U18 non-verbal indications of safeguarding concerns.
- In the event of any one of the above adults should:
  - report immediately to the DLP;
  - explain their concerns and the reasons behind them;
  - the DLP will advise you on the next step.

### C4) Recognising symptoms of abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other young people, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family.

There are four main types of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The abuser may be a stranger, a family member, a friend, a neighbour or they may be someone the child encounters through their programme with ELI, for example:

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- at the homestay.
- at the secondary school.
- at ELI English classes.
- at an ELI leisure activity.

An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child.

There is no textbook list of signs and signals. Being alert to abuse means:

- thinking about what you are seeing and asking if it is acceptable practice;
- taking seriously what you are told;
- responding to the stresses behind requests for help or other presenting problems;
- being alert to signals or non-verbal communication or challenging behaviour, and aware that this could indicate unacceptable practice is being deliberately hidden or denied;
- and reporting any doubts to the DLP.

### **C5) How to respond to a child or young adult telling you about abuse**

When someone talks to you about alleged abuse, remember you are not investigating the situation, you are just listening. If a child discloses abuse, remember that this may be the beginning of a legal process, as well as of a process of recovery for the child. Legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child's words have been influenced in anyway by the person they told.

*The following guidance should be followed as far as possible:*

- Rather than directly questioning the child, just listen and be supportive.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events, but don't push the child to tell you more than they wish.
- Do not promise to keep the information a secret. Rather you must inform the child that you will have to share this with the person responsible for their safety.
- Write an account of the conversation immediately afterwards, as close to verbatim as possible. Make a note of what was actually said, using his or her own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstance in which the disclosure came about.
- Where physical harm is being reported use a body map to indicate the location of cuts, bruises and abrasions, noting the colour of any bruising. Hand your record to the DLP, who will contact the local children's social care office where appropriate.

### **C6) Keeping Records**

- All serious concerns communicated to the DLP will be responded to on the same day.
- All information regarding allegations of abuse or safeguarding concerns is recorded in writing first, where possible, by the adult who has received the information and then by the DLP.
- Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records.

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## **C7) If an under 18 student or adult student is accused**

The DLP will work with the Appropriate Social Work Department for advice on appropriate actions to take to ensure the safety of the child.

## **D) Training**

### **D1) Responsibility and D2) How training is delivered**

The DLP has overall responsibility for ensuring all adults have appropriate training and that this is updated annually. ELI Schools conducts Children First, Child Protection Training through Barnardo's. Additional sessions will be organised where deemed necessary.

## **E) Safer Recruitment**

### **E1) Overview**

Every adult who is recruited by the school (including homestay hosts and drivers) undergoes a process of suitability checking for work with U18s as appropriate to their role and status both through documentation check and the interview and selection process.

### **E2) Recruitment stages for all**

In all recruitment interviews for roles with substantial access to U18s there are questions exploring the applicant's awareness of safeguarding. For example: 'Safeguarding is key to everything we do. What do you understand by this term, and can you give examples of how your role can contribute?'

References are always followed up for new staff members.

All ELI Staff must have up to date Garda Clearance.

### **E3) Recruitment of Homestays and Transport providers**

Homestay hosts will agree to ELI Schools policies and procedures. The main host, who will always be present overnight when hosting under 18s, will complete Garda Vetting process for everyone in the home aged 16 and over. Parental consent is given for members of the household aged between 16 and 18 to be Garda Vetted.

## **F) Welfare / Implementing Safeguarding**

### **F1) Welfare provision**

We provide general care for our U18s through the following means:

- 24-hour emergency phone number given to all students, parents and agents
- Safeguarding policy read and understood by all staff and contracted partners (host families and drivers)
- Constant safeguarding review and training updates

### **F2) U18 Behaviour and discipline**

ELI Schools insists on appropriate behaviours in all its activities. Students are all sent a code of conduct in advance of travel, which must be signed by parents of U18 students.

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