



**Safeguarding
&
Child Protection Policy**

Kehoe-France Northshore

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Introduction & Context

At Kehoe-France, safeguarding the well-being of our students is our highest priority. In accordance with Louisiana state law, all school personnel are designated as *mandated reporters*, required to report any and all allegations of abuse disclosed to them. In fulfilling this critical duty, our staff are guided by a set of principles and beliefs that reflect our deep commitment to student safety and welfare.

I. Principles, Beliefs, and Philosophy

Kehoe-France is committed to the following foundational principles:

- The welfare of every child is paramount. Every student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation, regardless of race, religion, ability, gender, or culture.
- All students must be safe and feel safe while at school.
- Students are entitled to a rich and comprehensive curriculum that equips them with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe.
- Every adult on campus must demonstrate a clear commitment to protecting the students in their care.
- We work in partnership with parents/guardians and external professionals to ensure the well-being and protection of our students.
- Our guiding principle in all decisions and actions is to act in the best interest of the child.

II. Aims and Objectives

This safeguarding and child protection policy is designed to:

- Ensure a world-class, safe, and nurturing environment where students can thrive and learn.
- Establish the systems and procedures in place to maintain student safety.
- Increase staff awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues, clearly defining their roles and responsibilities.
- Identify students who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm.
- Promote effective communication among staff on all safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Provide clear and actionable procedures for staff, volunteers, and third-party personnel in the event of a concern.
- Maintain transparency with students, parents, and carers regarding our safeguarding practices through accessible and clearly defined policies.

III. Accountability and Ownership

This policy is endorsed and upheld by the leadership of Kehoe-France and the International Schools Partnership (ISP). It has been developed in collaboration with, and approved by, the ISP Group Health & Safety Director. The policy applies to all partner organizations or agencies granted unsupervised access to students, as well as any contracted personnel working on our campus.

IV. Definitions

Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the comprehensive efforts to protect students from harm, prevent the impairment of their development, and promote their overall health and well-being. This includes creating the conditions necessary for every child to achieve their fullest potential and transition successfully through their educational journey at Kehoe-France.

Child Protection

Child protection is a central component of safeguarding. It specifically involves protecting students who are currently suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm due to abuse or neglect.

Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our preventative safeguarding measures are robust and far-reaching. Without adequate safeguards in place, students of concern may become students at risk of significant harm. When necessary, we will collaborate with external agencies to provide the appropriate support. While we acknowledge that certain influencing factors may lie beyond our control, we remain proactive in our responsibility to do all we can to protect every child entrusted to our care.

Rationale

I. Principles and Expectations

This policy outlines the guiding principles and expectations that must be upheld by all staff members and the broader school community. It defines the consistent and proactive steps we take to uphold our commitment to student safeguarding across all school environments—classrooms, athletic fields, extracurricular spaces, and beyond.

Kehoe-France's safeguarding policy is grounded in the following core principles:

- The best interests of the child must always be the primary consideration in any decision affecting them.
- Children have the right to access and share information, provided it does not cause harm to themselves or others.
- Children are entitled to freedom of thought, belief, and the practice of religion.
- Every child has the right to protection from physical and emotional harm and mistreatment.
- The school has a responsibility to take all appropriate measures to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.
- The school must act decisively to ensure that children are not subjected to abduction, trafficking, or unlawful sale.
- Children must be shielded from any form of exploitation or activity that could hinder their well-being or development.
- Disciplinary actions must never be cruel, degrading, or harmful; all forms of abusive punishment are strictly prohibited.

These expectations reflect our shared commitment to upholding the dignity, rights, and safety of every child in our care.

II. Related Documents

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following Kehoe-France documents:

- Health & Safety Plan
- Faculty Handbook
- Family Handbooks
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Each of these documents contributes to a comprehensive and cohesive approach to safeguarding, ensuring consistency across all areas of school operations.

Organizational & Individual Responsibilities

I. Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities

The Head of School and Division Principals acknowledge their overarching responsibility to ensure that all Kehoe-France staff members understand and follow this safeguarding policy, along with all related policies.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for:

- Ensuring the consistent implementation and adherence to this policy across the school by all staff and volunteers.
- Allocating sufficient time and resources to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.
- Promoting a school culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised and handled sensitively.
- Ensuring safeguarding principles are embedded within the school's curriculum.
- Overseeing the physical security of the school site.
- Reviewing and customizing this policy annually to meet the specific needs of Kehoe-France.
- Mapping and incorporating relevant local legislation, guidance, and agency contacts into the customized school version of this policy.
- Deploying only those staff—who will have unsupervised contact with children—who have undergone all safe recruitment procedures.
- Maintaining accurate records of all safeguarding and child protection training undertaken by staff. These records must be accessible for audit and updated according to required training timelines.

II. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Kehoe-France will always identify at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to serve as the primary point of contact for all safeguarding matters. The DSL supports the Head of School, Division Principals, and all school staff in safeguarding efforts.

The DSL may be a member of the Senior Leadership Team (e.g., Head of School or a Division Principal), but they must complete the same required training and operate under the same expectations as any DSL. The SLT should carefully evaluate this appointment to ensure suitability and effectiveness.

Guiding Principles:

1. The welfare of the child is always paramount.
2. Confidentiality is to be maintained, as far as is reasonably possible.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Leading the school's response and support for any student who may be at risk.
- Ensuring all staff—teaching and non-teaching—are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Undertaking specialized safeguarding training beyond the standard training for general staff.
- Maintaining accurate, confidential records of child protection concerns.
- Understanding and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of local safeguarding protocols, contact agencies, and referral procedures.
- Ensuring the school community knows who the DSL is and facilitating open communication with staff.
- Acting promptly on concerns reported by staff and determining the appropriate course of action.

All staff must report safeguarding concerns to the DSL, who will then make an informed decision and take appropriate follow-up action.

III. Responsibilities of All Staff

All staff with unsupervised contact with children are expected to:

- Be thoroughly familiar with, and follow, this policy and all other related policies (e.g., Health & Safety Manual, Faculty and Family Handbooks, Intimate Care Policy, Physical Intervention Policy).
- Complete all required recruitment checks prior to beginning employment, unless a risk assessment is in place to ensure supervision until checks are complete.
- Remain vigilant to possible signs of abuse or neglect.
- Listen attentively and take student concerns seriously.
- Record and report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL using proper documentation procedures.

- Follow all outlined procedures when a concern arises about a child's safety.
- Support others—students or adults—who are involved in or subject to safeguarding concerns, and cooperate fully in any related investigation.
- Complete all required training in child protection, safeguarding, and safe recruitment practices, including periodic refresher courses.
- Understand that violations of the ISP or Kehoe-France Code of Conduct, either inside or outside the workplace, may result in disciplinary or legal consequences.

IV. Responsibilities of Occasionally or Supervised-Contact Staff (including Partnering and Third-Party Agencies)

Staff and individuals who have occasional or supervised contact with students, including those from partner or third-party agencies, are required to:

- Participate in a safeguarding induction or briefing appropriate to their role, including understanding their reporting responsibilities.
- Provide written confirmation that all partner or third-party agency staff members have undergone safe recruitment checks and received a safeguarding briefing tailored to their expected level of interaction with children.
- Undergo a risk assessment by the Head of School, Division Principals, or DSL if they are to be supervised rather than fully vetted. Individual staff members or third-party agencies cannot make these determinations independently.
- Follow the Kehoe-France Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if their organization does not have its own policy. This policy must be acknowledged and adhered to as part of their contractual agreement.
- Comply with the procedures and expectations set forth in this document.
- Receive and follow guidance on appropriate, safe working practices.

Training & Support

I. Training

Kehoe-France acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers are adequately trained to fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. The following provisions outline the school's commitment to safeguarding training:

- **Annual Training:**
All staff and volunteers must complete general safeguarding training upon joining the school and annually thereafter. Training may be provided by the International Schools Partnership (ISP), Kehoe-France School, recognized online platforms, or through in-person sessions.
- **Policy Accessibility:**
All safeguarding-related policies will be made available in relevant languages to support accessibility and understanding across our diverse school community.

- **Recognition and Response Skills:**
Staff and volunteers will be supported in developing the skills necessary to identify signs of abuse or neglect and to take appropriate, timely action in response to concerns.
- **DSL Specialist Training:**
Individuals designated as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will undergo specialist and up-to-date training that is both approved by ISP and supported by Kehoe-France's Senior Leadership Team. This ensures DSLs maintain the expertise needed to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.
- **Induction Requirements:**
All new employees and volunteers will receive a full induction that includes:
 - An overview of safeguarding responsibilities
 - Identification of the DSL and reporting structure
 - Clear instructions on how to report concerns
- **Safe Recruitment Training:**
Designated staff involved in hiring will complete accredited Safe Recruitment training. This training must be refreshed every five years.
- **Pre-Contact Requirements:**
No staff member or volunteer may have unsupervised contact with students until their initial safeguarding training and required background checks have been completed.
- **Student Support Following Harm:**
If a student is identified as having suffered, or is suffering from, harm, Kehoe-France will provide access to appropriate support services. Once cleared with any investigating authority (if involved), such support may include:
 - Direct assistance from the School Counselor
 - Referral to a qualified external agency

The DSL will maintain current information on local, regional, or national organizations available to assist students in such cases.

II. Support

Kehoe-France also recognizes its duty of care to staff who may be affected by safeguarding matters. In recognition of the emotional and professional strain that such cases can involve, the school will ensure the following:

- **Staff Well-being:**
The DSL and Senior Leadership Team will coordinate access to external counseling or support resources for any staff member impacted by a safeguarding concern.
- **Clear Boundaries on Investigations:**
Unless explicitly directed to do so by the appropriate authority, staff must never conduct their own investigations into suspected abuse. Investigative work must be handled by qualified professionals to avoid compromising any criminal or legal proceedings.

Forms of Abuse

I. The Four Main Types of Abuse

Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. It can involve direct harm or a failure to take action to prevent harm. Kehoe-France recognizes the following four primary categories of abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, or otherwise inflicting physical harm on a child.

2. **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child that causes severe adverse effects on emotional development. This may include verbal abuse, humiliation, or communicating that the child is worthless or unloved.

3. **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities, including both physical contact and non-contact acts (e.g., exploitation through social media or the internet).

4. **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or emotional needs, which can result in serious impairment of health or development.

II. Specific Forms of Abuse

While the categories above represent broad types of harm, abuse may take on many specific forms. Staff must be vigilant, informed, and responsive to all potential indicators of abuse, including the following:

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against girls. It has significant health and emotional consequences. While it may be considered a cultural practice in some communities, it is illegal in many countries and is never acceptable. Staff must handle FGM concerns sensitively and always act in the best interests of the child.

- **Forced Marriage (FM)**

A forced marriage occurs when one or both parties do not give full consent, often due to threats, coercion, or emotional pressure. Unlike arranged marriages, forced marriage violates human rights and must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

- **Self-Harm & Suicidal Ideation**

- **Suicidal Ideation (SI):**

Refers to thoughts or plans about suicide, either passive (wishing to be dead) or active (having a plan or intent). Warning signs may include:

- Withdrawal, mood swings, sleep/eating changes, reckless behavior
- Talking or writing about death, hopelessness, or being a burden
- Giving away possessions
- Risk factors include a family history of mental illness or suicide, bullying, or access to dangerous means (e.g., firearms, substances). All Suicidal Ideation must be taken seriously and reported to the DSL immediately.

- **Self-Harm:**
Involves deliberate injury to oneself as a coping mechanism rather than a suicide attempt. Signs may include:
 - Physical: cuts, bruises, burns, bald patches
 - Emotional: depression, social withdrawal, substance use, eating disorders
 - Staff must report any suspected self-harm to the DSL. Parental contact will follow, and students may be required to seek professional mental health clearance before returning to school.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
CSE involves manipulating or coercing a child into sexual activities, often in exchange for gifts, money, or affection. It may occur in person or online and often involves a power imbalance, intimidation, or threats.
- **Sexting**
Sexting refers to the sharing of explicit images or messages by minors. Motivations can include peer pressure, self-esteem issues, flirtation, or coercion. While criminal in nature, these cases are often best handled through education and support, rather than punitive measures.

III. Important Notes

- The above list is **not exhaustive**. Other forms of abuse or indicators of harm may emerge in different contexts.
- Regardless of the type of concern, **staff must always follow the school's safeguarding procedures** by reporting immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

I. Internet Safety

The increasing presence of electronic media and a wide range of digital devices has introduced additional risks for children. These risks include:

- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Ignoring age restrictions and engaging with unknown individuals (peers or adults), increasing vulnerability to grooming or bullying
- Grooming and sexual exploitation
- Sharing personal or sensitive information
- Online gambling and potential financial harm
- Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, often linked to social media and mobile communication, is an escalating concern. Kehoe-France addresses these challenges through proactive education—embedding internet safety into the curriculum and supporting it through our school counseling program. Students are taught to identify when they or others may be at risk and are equipped with strategies and language to seek help or take appropriate action.

II. Mobile Phones, iPads, and Other Photographic Devices

While staff may occasionally use personal devices to capture images of students for school purposes, these images must be promptly uploaded to the school's secure system and immediately deleted from the personal device.

Each year, families are asked to complete a "Publication Permission Form" to indicate whether they consent to their child's image being used in publications such as the yearbook, newsletters, local newspapers, or on school-managed social media. All staff must adhere strictly to these permissions.

III. Photographs and Videos

Celebrating students' milestones through photos and videos is important. However, sensitivity and safety must come first. For example:

- A child or family with a history of abuse may fear being located by a perpetrator through online imagery.
- Some families may limit their online presence for personal or safety reasons.

To respect all families, we ask that parents and visitors refrain from photographing or filming children other than their own unless explicit permission has been obtained from the child's parent/guardian.

IV. Restrooms

To ensure the safety and privacy of all students:

- Adults (staff and visitors) must never use restrooms designated for students.
- Students may not use restrooms intended solely for adult use.

Violations of this policy may lead to termination of employment or removal from campus.

V. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Allegations against staff or volunteers must always be taken seriously and handled according to proper procedures. An allegation is distinct from a complaint and may involve:

- Harm or risk of harm to a child
- A suspected criminal offense involving a child
- Behavior that could pose a risk to children

All allegations must be immediately referred to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). If criminal activity is suspected, law enforcement may be contacted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Regional HR Director must be informed within 24 hours.

If the allegation involves a member of the SLT, the Regional Director, ISP Group Head of Safeguarding, and Kehoe-France DSL must be notified. If warranted, the staff member may be suspended during investigation—this is a neutral act and does not imply guilt. All steps will be taken with guidance from HR and safeguarding authorities.

VI. Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers are expected to report concerns about the conduct or attitude of colleagues. Legitimate concerns raised in good faith are considered protected disclosures and will not lead to disciplinary action. However, knowingly false or malicious reporting may result in disciplinary measures.

VII. Bullying

Bullying is treated as a serious matter and may escalate to a safeguarding issue if unaddressed. Kehoe-France is committed to investigating all concerns of bullying—whether in person or online—and to taking steps to prevent recurrence. For more details, please consult our Bullying Policy in the Family Handbook.

VIII. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children with disabilities may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities. Staff must avoid assuming that changes in behavior, injuries, or mood are solely linked to a disability. Communication challenges may hinder a child's ability to disclose abuse. Extra vigilance, careful observation, and prompt reporting of concerns are essential.

IX. Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse is a reality and will always be addressed as a safeguarding matter. Such abuse may include:

- Sexual harassment or assault
- Inappropriate touching
- Initiation rituals or physical violence

Gender dynamics often play a role in peer abuse. Any behavior that is unwanted or involves individuals who cannot legally consent due to age or disability must not be dismissed as normal developmental behavior. School safeguarding procedures apply fully to these cases.

X. Physical Intervention and Restraint

Physical intervention may be necessary to prevent harm. Any such intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and the least restrictive option possible.

Following any incident:

- A full report must be submitted to the SLT by the staff member involved
- Student accounts must be documented
- Security footage may be reviewed
- Parents/guardians must be informed
- The student should be checked for injuries and debriefed

Please refer to our Physical Intervention Policy for detailed procedures.

XI. Safe Recruitment and Selection

Kehoe-France adheres to safe recruitment standards to ensure all staff working with children are suitable. At least one trained individual in safe recruitment must be part of each hiring panel.

Measures include:

- A structured interview process with trained personnel
- Verification of identity, qualifications, and references

- Criminal background checks in all relevant jurisdictions over the past ten years
- Drug screening

Procedures for Safeguarding

I. Initial Concern

If, at any time, a staff member suspects that a student may be a victim of abuse or is at risk of abuse or other harm, they must not attempt to investigate. Instead, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible using the school's "Record of Concern" form (commonly known as the "pink form").

Staff are required to report any concern regarding a student's safety—even if that concern later proves to be unfounded. It is far better to raise concerns early than to withhold information that might otherwise protect a child from harm. Often, concerns arise from a physical or emotional indicator rather than a direct disclosure. In such cases, the Record of Concern form should still be completed.

If a student makes a direct disclosure, the guidelines under "Dealing with Disclosure, Reporting, and Further Action" must be followed.

II. Dealing with Disclosure, Reporting, and Further Action

Confidentiality Disclaimer:

If a student asks to speak confidentially, staff must not promise confidentiality. They must explain that if the information shared indicates abuse, it must be passed on to the appropriate safeguarding authorities.

The following five key practices should guide staff during a disclosure:

1. Receive

- Stop and listen to the child, even if the timing is inconvenient.
- Avoid interruptions.
- Do not show shock or disbelief.

2. Reassure

- Stay calm and supportive.
- Avoid judgment.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Explain that the child is doing the right thing by speaking up and share what the next steps will be.

3. React

- React only as necessary to clarify the situation.
- Use open-ended questions.
- Avoid leading or suggestive questions.
- Do not criticize the alleged perpetrator.

4. Record

- Make brief notes during or immediately after the disclosure (within 24 hours).

- Use the child's own words; do not interpret.
- Record the time, date, and location.

5. Report

- Complete a full written or typed Record of Concern and submit it to the DSL as soon as possible.
- If needed, use the body map included in the safeguarding manual.
- If the DSL determines a report to Louisiana DCFS is required, the reporting staff member will be responsible for making the call, guided by the DSL per state law.

After a disclosure or concern is reported:

- The DSL (or Head of School/Division Principals in their absence) will gather notes and evidence.
- The DSL will determine the appropriate next steps and whether the issue falls within the local legal framework for child protection.
- All information and decisions must be thoroughly documented and stored securely.
- Only the DSL or relevant SLT members should be consulted about ongoing concerns. Staff should not discuss Record of Concern matters in group settings.
- The DSL maintains a current list of relevant external agencies for support and may consult the Group Head of Safeguarding with ISP as needed.

Record Keeping & Confidentiality

I. Record Keeping

- Child protection records must be stored securely and separately from the child's general school records.
- These records should be accessible only to the DSL and designated senior staff.
- Mark the student's general file discreetly (e.g., with a red star) to indicate a protection file exists.
- Begin a protection file as soon as any concern arises, through internal staff reports, communication from a previous school, or notice from an external agency.
- All Record of Concern submissions must be as detailed as possible—even seemingly minor concerns can become significant later.
- If any file is accessed or altered, a dated note must be included detailing who accessed it, why, and when.

Each Record of Concern must include:

- Student details: full name, DOB, address, and family information
- Date/time of concern
- Nature of concern

- Actions taken and by whom

For disclosures, also include:

- Full account of the child's words
- Questions asked (if any)
- Time and place
- Who was present
- Student's demeanor and transition after disclosure

II. Confidentiality

All child protection matters are confidential and should be shared only with those who need to know, as determined by the DSL or senior leadership.

Records may be stored electronically, but handwritten notes must be scanned and preserved in their original form.

Auditing, Reporting, Review, and Sign-Off

To ensure continued compliance with ISP standards, the Group Head of Safeguarding will conduct routine audits of safeguarding practices and documentation.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and DSL to:

- Respond promptly to any Action Plan items following an audit.
- Maintain compliance with ISP policies and legal requirements.

This policy is owned by Kehoe-France and is available to students and parents upon request. Translations into key languages can be provided as needed.

Review Schedule:

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly, and at minimum once every two years.