



International School Telemark

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Version 3 (Jan 2022)

## Child Protection Statement

We recognise our collective moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students.

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 that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, stakeholders and students at International School Telemark.



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# What is Child Safeguarding?

**Child safeguarding** describes the actions taken to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. It means:

- Protecting children from abuse or maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow-up in a safe environment with effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Providing children with education about their own rights and how to keep safe

**The Child Protection Policy** is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children who are identified as suffering from harm or are at risk of harm.

## Terminology

**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.

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

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

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



# Principles and Beliefs

International School Telemark (IST) is committed to safeguarding all students' well-being in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the rights that need to be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse.

In addition, given the highly mobile populations within the International School System, an International Task Force on Child Protection has set out, as a minimum, the following requirements of schools to provide safeguarding and child protection for their students:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.
- IST will meet the rules and regulations of Norway in terms of Child Protection.<sup>iii</sup>



# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Child Protection Officer

### The Child Protection Officer must:

- Lead measures for child protection in the school.
- Ensures that all staff are familiar with, and adhere to, this Child Protection Policy. This includes inducting new staff.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and take account of their concerns and feelings.
- Have a working knowledge of the Norwegian Child Protection Law, Statutory Guidelines; Education & School Regulations as well as Inter-Agency Support available to the School, especially the functioning of the Kommune's Child Protection Agency.<sup>iii</sup>
- Remain appropriately trained and take responsibility to participate regularly in courses where their knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date with any developments relevant to their role
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community as well as representing the key link to statutory agencies during any following formal investigations.
- Alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs.
- Keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely.
- Develop effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to Kommune's Child Protection Services (*Barneverntjenesten*) and/or the Police as appropriate. Informs the Leadership Team immediately.
- Attend and contribute to Child Protection Conferences and Strategy Meetings both inside and outside of the school.
- Report to the Leadership Team on a regular basis and more often if a situation arises and ensuring all relevant information around Child Protection is communicated to the team.
- Work with parents collectively on a regular basis through the Parents Council (FAU) to ensure that ensures all parents are aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and how referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- Ensuring this Policy is implemented and promoted.

At IST, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) is divided among two members of staff due to their established leadership and pastoral care roles. For the Primary School the CPO is the **PYP coordinator**, and for the Middle School the CPO is the **MYP coordinator**.



# Employees

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students, we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all Employees. Good practice includes:

- Treating all students with respect
- Being a good listener
- Encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among students
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately, adhering to the IB Learner Profile, and being good role models
- Involving students in decisions that affect them
- Being alert to changes in students' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation.
- Recognising that when a pupil demonstrates challenging behaviour that this may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding the school's Safe Child policy, Employee Behaviour Policy and Guidance Documents on wider Child Protection issues.
- Asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that personal and family circumstances, as well as the backgrounds of some students, may lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with Norwegian law.
- Referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the Child Protection Officer/Supervisor or, if necessary, directly to the Police or the Kommune's Child Protection Agency (*Barneverntjenester*)
- Following the school's rules regarding communication and relationships with students, including via social media.
- Following the IST core values, IST Guiding Statements and the principles of respect, responsibility, reliability and resilience.



# Students

Students are taught to understand and manage risk through tutor and class teacher time, wellbeing classes, mindfulness sessions, 1:1 teacher-student meetings (twice a year), visiting speakers, as well as through all aspects of their daily school life. Discussions about risk are designed to be both empowering and enabling for all students and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety by teaching our students to behave in a responsible manner. The school has an articulated pastoral programme which addresses this policy directly. The Staff Handbook, Parents' Guide, Anti-Bullying Policy, Offensive Behaviour Policy and *Opplæringsloven ga* protocol are included in the pastoral care and student wellbeing programme.

Our students are constantly reminded about online safety; the risks of sharing content and images online as well as how to meet the challenge of bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. The School continually promotes an ethos of respect for the entire school community and students are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.



# Safer Employee Appointments

Our School ensures that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' Staff and allow 'safe' volunteers to work with our students and all children associated with our school. This applies for all Permanent, Temporary, and Substitute vacancies.

## **Safer Employee Appointments means that all applicants will:**

- Provide at least two referees, both of whom can comment on the applicant's suitability for working with children and young people.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications pursuant to Norwegian law
- Provide Police Clearance Certificate (dated within three months prior to the application date) <https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2008-01-23-62/§1>

## **The School ensures that:**

- The Vacancy Advertisement will include a statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It will refer to the need for the successful candidate to undertake a Police Clearance Check (*Politiattest*).
- Every Job Description and Person Specification for all roles in our School includes a description of the position-holder's responsibility for Child Protection.
- All new employees and volunteers will undergo an induction-programme by the Child Protection Officer.
- All employees (new and existing) are required to sign a document to confirm they have received a copy of, and have read, the School's Child Protection Policy.
- The School obtains written confirmation from teacher-supply agencies (*vikarbyråer*) and third-party organisations that they have satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate checks in respect of individuals they provide to work in the school that the school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual directly.
- Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training institution, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.
- The School maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken and ensures that the record is updated.





## Volunteers

All Volunteers will undergo a Police Clearance Check (*Politiattest*). **Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.**

## Contractors

The School will check the identity of all Contractors working on-site and requests police checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work with children in an unsupervised activity.

All contractors and visitors to IST are required to sign in at the reception and to wear a **blue visitor's badge**.



# Signs and Symptoms of Abuse<sup>1</sup>

It is not always easy to recognise that a child is being hurt or is at risk; therefore, abuse is often undetected. There are indicators (signs, symptoms or clues) that when found, either on their own or in various combinations, can point to possible abuse, neglect or family violence.

Indicators can be:

- Physical – such as bruises or burns and relate to a child's physical condition.
- Behavioural – such as a child cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly; or a caregiver constantly calling a child 'stupid' or 'dumb'.
  - Behavioural indicators can be displayed by a child or by the alleged abuser.

Indicators do not necessarily prove that a child has been harmed. They alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. The presence of indicators suggests when the employee should **begin asking questions and seeking help**.

Employees keep in mind that some of these behaviours may occur during times of stress from life events that do not involve abuse, such as accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling, divorce, bereavement, problems at school or other anxiety-inducing or traumatic events.

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<sup>1</sup> These possible signs of abuse (physical, emotional and neglect) are taken from Child Matters, based in New Zealand:  
<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/>



# Signs and Symptoms of Physical Child Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being abused. Some examples of this are:

- **Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions**
  - Suspicious locations include: face, lips, gums, mouth, eyes, torso, back, buttocks, back of legs, external genitalia.
  - Shapes of suspicious injuries include: clustered, forming regular patterns, teeth marks, hand-print, fingertips, a recognizable imprint left by a belt or other item.
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- **Unexplained burns**
  - Small circular burns particularly on soles of feet, palms of hands, buttocks
  - Immersion burns i.e. part of the body had been placed in hot water
  - Burns showing a distinct pattern or outline where the child has been held against a hot object i.e. an iron, stove
  - Rope burns on arms, neck, legs, torso
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- **Unexplained fractures or dislocations**
  - Skull, facial bones, spinal fractures, dislocations (particularly of hip or shoulders)
  - Multiple fractures at different stages of healing
  - Fractures in very young children (i.e. those who are not walking)
  - Bald patches on scalp resulting from hair pulling
- **Changes in a Child's Behaviour that could indicate physical abuse:**
  - Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations
  - Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
  - May cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
  - May display a vacant stare, or frozen watchfulness
  - May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
  - Displays indiscriminate affection-seeking behaviour
  - May be compliant or eager to please
  - Tries to take care of, or protect the parents or caregiver
  - When at play, imitates negative behaviour or language e.g. smacks or yells at a doll
  - Frequently behaves in a way that provokes punishment
  - Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
  - Runs away from home, or is afraid to go home
  - Describes abusive situations
  - May regress e.g. bed-wetting
  - May indicate a general sadness. May show this in drawing and play.
  - Is violent to animals or other children
- **Changes in an Adult's Behaviour that could indicate physical abuse:**
  - May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time
  - May appear unconcerned about child's well-being
  - May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child
  - May provide an explanation which is not believable given the child's age, or the nature of the child's injuries
  - If more than one parent or caregiver claims to have been present at the accident or time of injury, there may be disagreement as to how it happened



- May state the child is prone to injuries, or always lies about how injuries occur
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child
- Shakes an infant
- Threats or attempts to injure the child
- Is aggressive or violent towards other family members
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others



# Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Child Abuse

There may be physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause
  - Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
  - Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
  - Appears pale, emaciated, has 'sunken cheeks'
  - Body fat ratio is extremely low
  - Skin may feel like parchment or paper resulting from dehydration
  - Has not attained significant developmental milestones within the child's age range
  - Dressed differently from other children in the family
  - Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family
  - Child suffers from a condition called non-organic failure to thrive. This occurs when the child (infant or very young child) falls behind in weight, height and development with no medical explanation - this may also be the result of neglect.
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- **Changes in a Child's Behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse:**
    - Suffers from severe developmental lags (speech, motor, sensory)
    - Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
    - Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse
    - Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
    - Displays extreme attention-seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
    - When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home (e.g. smacking or yelling at a doll)
    - Recurring physical complaints without medical cause (e.g. abdominal pain, headaches, sore throat, nausea etc.)
    - Runs away from home
    - Nightmares, poor sleeping patterns
    - Antisocial behaviours. May not cope well in social settings
    - Lack of self-esteem
    - Obsessive behaviours
    - Developing psychotic symptoms
    - Appears generally as a 'sad child'
    - Initiates that they have witnessed family violence or violence is occurring in their home
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- **Changes in an Adult's Behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse:**
    - Constantly calls the child names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child
    - Continually threatens the child with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one
    - Has unrealistic expectations of the child
    - Treats the child differently from siblings or peers
    - Actively refuses to help the child, or acknowledge the child's request for help
    - Threatens the child with physical harm or death, or forces the child to observe



- physical harm inflicted on a loved one
- Locks the child in a closet or room for extended periods of time
- Refuses to allow interactions or relationships with peers or adults outside of the family
- Teaches or reinforces criminal behaviour
- Withholds physical and verbal affection from the child and ignores the child's attempts to interact
- Involves the child in "adult issues", such as separation or access issues
- Keeps the child at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent



# Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse<sup>2</sup>

As well as following [The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs'](#) (Bufdir) [advice on how to identify the signs and symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse](#), the School also follows the [Stop It Now!](#) Programme which has developed resources to support those involved in Child Protection. These resources come recommended by [The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children](#).

The following are possible signs of sexual abuse in children's behaviours. It needs to be noted that an individual sign/indicator does not mean that a child is being abused: but **the presence of several signs/indicators means that employees will begin asking questions and seeking help.**

Employees must keep in mind that some of these behaviours may occur during times of stress such as experiencing divorce, bereavement, problems at school or other anxiety-inducing or traumatic events.

Behaviour one may see in a child or adolescent experiencing sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Age-inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings or descriptions
- States that they have been abused, or describes activities which are sexually abusive, or hints about such activities
- Has nightmares or other sleep problems without an explanation
- Seems distracted or distant at odd times
- Has a sudden change in eating habits
  - Refuses to eat
  - Loses or drastically increases appetite
  - Has trouble swallowing.
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawal
- Leaves "clues" that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Writes, draws, plays or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Refuses to talk about a secret shared with an adult or older child
- Develops new or unusual fear of certain people or places
- Refuses to go home, or to home of relative or friend for no apparent reason
- Talks about a new older friend
- Suddenly has money, toys or other gifts without reason
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty or bad

## Signs more typical of sexual abuse in younger children:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others e.g. demonstration of explicit sexual

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<sup>2</sup> Signs from Child Matters, based in New Zealand: <http://www.childmatters.org.nz/> have been incorporated into with the Stop It



acts

- Comments such as "I've got a secret", or "I don't like Uncle ..."
- Regression to an earlier stage of play or development
- Has new words for private body parts
- Resists removing clothes when appropriate times (bath, bed, toileting, diapering)
- Fire-lighting, particularly by boys

### **Signs more typical of sexual abuse in adolescents:**

- Self-injury (cutting, burning)
- Inadequate personal hygiene
- Recurring physical complaints without physiological basis (abdominal pain, headaches, sore throats, nausea etc.)
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sexual promiscuity
- Running away from home
- Depression, withdrawal, anxiety
- Suicide attempts
- Fear of intimacy or closeness
- Compulsive eating or dieting
- Compulsive behaviours (e.g. hand-washing)
- Sudden and pervasive interest in sex
- Acts out or behaves aggressively
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible
- Sexualized behaviour with younger children e.g. inappropriate touching, games with sexual overtones

### **Physical warning signs of sexual abuse**

Physical signs of sexual abuse are rare. If an employee sees these signs, then the child needs to be seen by a doctor. The employee must contact the Child Protection Officer and their School Principal immediately.

- Unusual or excessive itching, or pain in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or stools
- Pain experienced in urination or elimination
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training
- Pregnancy

There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of the child
- Is jealous of the child's relationship with peers or other adults, or is controlling of the child
- Discourages the child from unsupervised contact with peers
- Accuses the child of being sexually provocative
- Misuses alcohol or drugs
- Invades the child's privacy e.g. during dressing, when in bathroom etc.





- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to the child which appears sexual in nature, or has sexual overtones
- Displays an inappropriate relationship with the child. For example, treats the child as a 'partner' or 'girlfriend'
- May favour the victim over other children
- Uses the internet, text messages and social media to initiate conversations of a sexual nature with children and/or young people



# Signs and Symptoms of Neglect

There may be physical indicators that a child is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather which could result in recurrent colds, pneumonia, sunburn, frostbite etc.
- Is often extremely dirty or unbathed (not to be confused with the healthy dirtiness of an active child)
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time
- Malnourished - may be undersized, have low weight, sallowness, lack of body tone
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene
- May be left in the care of an inappropriate caregiver e.g. one that is too young or too old to care for and protect the child
- Does not receive adequate medical or dental care and has unattended dental problems
- Lacks adequate shelter - lives in housing that is unsafe, unheated, or is unsanitary
- Child suffers from a condition called non-organic failure to thrive. This occurs when the child (infant or very young child) falls behind in weight, height and development with no medical explanation - this may also be the result of emotional abuse.

**There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:**

- Suffers from severe developmental lags (speech, motor, sensory) without an obvious physical cause. Children may exhibit global development delays:  
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/conditions/global-development-delay>
- Demonstrates lack of attachment to parents
- Demonstrates indiscriminate attachment to other adults
- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
- Has poor school attendance or school performance
- Has poor social skills
- May steal food
- Is very demanding of affection or attention
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene
- Has frequent unsupervised absences from home, or is left at home alone or unsupervised
- Engages in delinquent acts, or abuses alcohol or drugs
- Discloses that parents are absent, or basic needs are not being met

**There may be indicators in adult behaviour that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:**

- Fails to provide for the child's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care
- Does not provide routine supervision for the child. Is frequently unaware of and has no



concern for the child's whereabouts or activities

- Fails to enrol a child in school or permits truancy, or fails to provide for the special educational needs of the child
- Leaves the child alone, unattended or fails to adequately supervise the child, or abandons the child
- Demonstrates little or no involvement in child's life - does not attend recreation events, school activities etc.
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child's needs
- Drug and alcohol abuse



# International School Telemark Reporting Procedures:

## Child Abuse and Neglect: Reporting Procedures

### Aims

The procedures must be followed by employees in instances where they feel that a student might have been abused by someone in their home, at the School or by others. The procedures below are based on advice received from the local Health Authorities.

### Guidelines

The following shall apply:

1. The employee has a **Duty of Care** and in every case, action must be taken in response to a suspicion or report of abuse or neglect concerning a child.
  - Duty of care relates to avoiding acts and avoiding omissions – in both cases, where the acts or omissions could result in harm to a child.
  - Duty of *care* exists in two forms:
    - A legal duty of care.
    - A moral duty of care.
2. If there is a suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred, the employee has a duty of care and therefore a legal obligation to act by reporting this to the Principal and The Child Protection Officer.
3. The Child Protection Officer who will instigate an immediate investigation and report to the School Principal. A report will be drafted within five days similar to the time for a ga case
4. The Principal and the Child Protection Officer will continue to monitor the case closely, ensuring that employees who work with the pupil have the information they need while maintaining strict boundaries of confidentiality.
5. Child Protection Officer will decide to consult the school nurse or The Kommune's Child Protection Agency (Barnevernet) for advice and/or support.
6. Whilst all employees must support and assist the child in the normal way, the Child Protection Officer must ensure that general agreements are formulated so that the employees are clear about who the child should be encouraged to confide in. If the child spontaneously approaches an employee, he or she should be supported but also



encouraged to approach the Child Protection Officer who has the experience and/or expertise in this area.

7. In all cases where the child is under 18 years of age, the parents will be informed if a pupil has been referred to the Child Protection Officer. The Parents will be invited for a meeting with the Child Protection Officer, Principal and Homeroom Teacher (*Kontaktlærer*) to discuss the matter.
8. Even when the parents can provide a good account of the child's behaviour, the child will continue to be observed to see whether the symptoms subside.

If the meeting with the parents does not prove to be satisfactory, they should be informed that the Child Protection Officer will be referring the matter to The Kommune's Child Protection Agency (*Barnevernet*).

9. If emergency action is called for – that is, if the child is at immediate risk - the Child Protection Officer, will inform the Principal that a referral is necessary. The Child Protection Officer) will then contact The Kommune's Child Protection Agency (*Barnevernet*) immediately.



# Child Safety in the Local Context

## Skolens handlingsplikt etter § 9a-3 annet ledd<sup>iv</sup>

Paragraf 9a-3 annet ledd regulerer skolens handlingsplikt dersom en ansatt ved skolen får kunnskap om eller mistenker at en elev utsettes for krenkende ord eller handlinger. Annet ledd lyder:

***Dersom nokon som er tilsett ved skolen, får kunnskap eller mistanke om at ein elev blir utsett for krenkjande ord eller handlingar som mobbing, diskriminering, vald eller rasisme, skal vedkommande snarast undersøkje saka og varsle skoleleiinga, og dersom det er nødvendig og mogleg, sjølv gripe direkte inn.***

Det er her fastsatt at alle som er ansatt ved skolen har en handlingsplikt som består av:

- plikt til å gjøre undersøkelser
- plikt til å varsle rektor
- plikt til å gripe inn

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<sup>i</sup> [Opplæringsloven](#)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1992-07-17-100>

<sup>iii</sup> " Kommunen er ansvarlig for å utføre de oppgaver etter loven som ikke er lagt til et statlig organ." §2-1 Ansvarsfordeling og administrasjon (Barnevernloven)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.udir.no/regelverkstolkninger/opplaring/Laringsmiljo/4-Skolens-handlingsplikt>

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and thank Skagerak International School for the use of their comprehensive and thorough child protection plan which forms the basis and text used in this policy.