

Global Connections (Scotland) Ltd

**CHILD PROTECTION
AND
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Version 1: April 2015

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Global Connections (Scotland) Limited (“we”) recognises that some of its students are children under 18 years of age (“young students”). Consequently, we have both a moral and a legal duty to protect and safeguard them and to promote their welfare.

We recognise that child safeguarding means caring for children appropriately and protecting them from anything which is not in their best interests. It includes health and safety, child protection and pastoral care, recognising that children depend on adults for their safety and well-being. All company policies and procedures are written with this responsibility in mind.

We understand that child protection means protecting children from abuse, which means all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child. We further recognise that all children have a right to protection and safeguarding regardless of their gender, sexual identity, racial origin, disability, language, culture, religious or other beliefs.

We are committed to working with relevant organisations, to take all necessary steps to ensure that the legal and pastoral duties owed to children in respect of child protection and safeguarding are discharged in accordance with current legislation and best practice.

We encourage an ethos in our schools where young students feel safe and secure and where they are able to communicate any problems or concerns they have to a responsible staff member or teacher in the school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent advice on dealing with potential child protection issues and the promotion of child safeguarding and welfare in our business operations.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, freelance contractors, adult students and external suppliers within Global Connections (Scotland) Limited and its language schools:

- Glasgow School of English
- Global School of English – Edinburgh
- Hamilton School of English
- Lorca Spanish

Glasgow School of English and Global School of English – Edinburgh are both primarily adult language schools, though they also accept individual young students aged 16–17 years who attend adult classes. They also may host special classes consisting only of groups of young students (aged 12–18). Hamilton School of English is primarily a summer school for young students. Lorca Spanish operates as both an adult and young student Spanish language school.

Particular sections below outline our policy as it bears specifically on the roles of teachers and other school staff, adult students studying with us at the same time as young students, homestay providers of accommodation, and other external suppliers who could have an impact on young students’ time at the school.

In addition, the policy addresses issues concerning time when young students are neither on school premises nor in their accommodation: namely at the time they first arrive in the UK to attend the school and when they leave the school to depart from the UK, during daily travel to and from school premises, and during leisure time.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Children (Scotland) Act 1995
Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. They should be enabled to:

- be as physically and mentally healthy as possible
- gain the maximum benefit from good-quality education opportunities
- live in a safe environment and be protected from harm
- experience emotional well-being
- become competent in looking after themselves and have a secure sense of identity, including cultural and racial identity.

All adults working with children must:

- treat the child's welfare as of paramount importance
- safeguard the welfare of children under their care
- be aware of any issues which might cause children harm
- be alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers may pose to children
- be aware of the effects of abuse and neglect on children
- contribute as necessary to all stages of the child protection process
- avoid making themselves vulnerable to suspicion of any form of inappropriate behaviour or abuse.

5. RECRUITMENT

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working and/or coming into contact with young students.

A. Recruitment Process

The first step to ensure this is through a rigorous recruitment process which must include the following:

- Interview process should touch on safeguarding issues in the questions
- All applicants must provide references prior to starting work
- Any gaps in a candidate's CV should be explained
- Proof of identity must be provided
- Appropriate criminal record checks should be carried out (candidates for school posts have to become PVG Scheme members)
- Until a satisfactory PVG Scheme certificate is received, new staff members should only be permitted to work with young students under exceptional circumstances and a record of the decision of the school to do so should be kept on file.
- In such circumstances, the new staff member must sign a Criminal Record Self-Declaration (Schedule 5) and during this period can have no unsupervised contact with young students.

B. Induction

All new staff members must receive an induction, during which they will receive a copy of this Policy and Code of Conduct for signature.

6. GUIDANCE FOR ADULTS IN CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

A. Teachers and School Staff

All school managers, teachers, activity leaders and administrative and support staff must follow our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Code of Conduct for School Staff** in Schedule 1 which should be considered an integral part of this Policy.

B. External Group Leaders

All external group leaders must follow the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Group Leaders** in Schedule 2 which should be considered an integral part of this Policy.

C. Homestay Providers

All homestay providers must follow our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Homestay Providers** in Schedule 3 which should be considered an integral part of this Policy.

D. Adult Students

At any given time there will likely be adult students in our schools at the same time as young students, either when a young student is part of an adult class or where the adult student is sharing school facilities with classes comprising only young students. Our student handbook and school rules advise adult students of appropriate behaviour towards young students in the school and our teachers and other staff monitor all students to ensure that everyone adheres to school rules.

E. External Suppliers

Any other accommodation providers (such as halls of residence) or external teaching facilities are regularly inspected to ensure they meet British Council standards. This includes making sure the vetting of residence staff such as caretakers and cleaners has been carried out in accordance with legal requirements.

We also require that any taxi companies or coach operators used to transport students ensure that all their drivers have appropriately vetted and that required background checks and criminal record checks have been carried out.

No other external suppliers (e.g. delivery, repair or servicing personnel) should be given unsupervised contact with young students outside the presence of other school staff.

7. DUTY OF CARE TO CHILDREN OUTSIDE SCHOOL OR RESIDENCES

We provide detailed information to all overseas young students regarding their general safety and welfare during their time in Scotland attending our schools. This includes a lot of practical information about living in the UK and in particular covers legal issues concerning alcohol, illegal drugs and sexual intercourse. Information is provided in Pre-Departure Guidelines given to students before they leave their home country, in the School Handbook which is given to every young student on arrival at the

school, and in British Council information booklets about living and studying in the UK made available through our website.

A. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are based on the potential hazards in any particular environment or location. Those undertaking risk assessments, where practicable, will visit the location concerned beforehand. Risk assessments must be reviewed annually to add any new or previously unforeseen hazards and document any new activities or environments.

Risk assessments must reflect that foreign students could be at greater risk than native English speakers, e.g. understanding safety announcements, warnings or signage, unfamiliarity with the culture, less awareness of dangerous or unsafe areas or locations.

B. Student Arrival and Departure

We take our duty of care to young students very seriously and appropriate risk assessments must be carried out to minimise risk to young students on first arrival and final departure from our schools. Comprehensive guidance regarding travel arrangements must be provided to every young student and tailored to the age and circumstances of each individual.

Our normal practice is for to arrange for a representative to meet a young student arriving at the airport, railway station or bus station, and the student will then be escorted to their place of residence (homestay provider or hall of residence if the student is part of a group). By default, an accompanied transfer is organised for all young students on arrival, though parents can opt out of this system if they wish.

Our representative will often be a taxi driver booked for this purpose from a local, vetted taxi company.

C. Commuting (Daily Travel between Accommodation and School)

Young students studying at Glasgow School of English and Global School of English –Edinburgh must travel each day to and from their accommodation and the school. This journey is normally made unaccompanied on public transport and this is explained to parents, who must consent to this in advance.

The only exception would be young students staying in residential accommodation on campus, during short seasonal programmes, where no commuting is required.

Wherever possible, homestay providers will accompany young students on their first trip from their residence to the school.

We provide young students with detailed information about train, bus and tram services so they can make the best public transport choices for their daily commute to their school. Young students are also provided with an emergency contact number which they can use if they get lost or need help with their journey to school or residence.

If requested, for added security the daily journey could be made using a taxi door-to-door from accommodation to school.

The school is proactive in making sure young students arrive at the school when expected and if they do not arrive and have not contacted the school to explain their absence, school staff will start a process of finding out why the student has not arrived.

D. Leisure Time and Activities

Young students regularly take part in leisure activities as part of their study experience outside of school hours. This can include organised excursions and free leisure time depending on the age of the young student.

All leisure activities organised by the school are subject to a risk assessment process.

All young students must be provided with practical information regarding personal safety for any time spent in unsupervised leisure time appropriate to the age of the student concerned.

Every young student is provided with a clear set of rules about what can and cannot be done during leisure time.

Where young students are under the age of 16 years, suitable supervision must be put in place all the time in no less than the following ratios:

- Under 8s: one adult to every six students
- 8-10s: one adult to every 10–15 students
- 11–16: one adult to every 15–20 students

For particular activities, the school may deem a smaller ratio to be suitable after a risk assessment.

Parents or guardians must be informed at the time of booking if there will be any periods of unsupervised leisure time for their child.

8. SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

The following staff members are our designated Safeguarding Officers and contact details:

David Orr	Director and Senior Safeguarding Officer	0141 332 8889 or 07775 591689
Sherisse MacIntosh	Glasgow School of English	0141 353 0033 or 07763 887151
Helen Guest	Global School of English–Edinburgh	0131 556 4702 or 07584 014929 or 07763 887151
Christine Ptolomey	Hamilton School	0131 440 3301 or 07763 887151
Ricky Kemp	Lorca Spanish	0141 332 7970 or 07763 887151

Any issues concerning child protection and safeguarding should be passed on immediately to the nearest available safeguarding officer and not discussed with anyone else. Information regarding suspected abuse or bullying should be recorded in writing in an Incident Report Form (Schedule 4) and passed to the safeguarding officer as soon as possible.

Safeguarding officers must respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and they must record their actions on the Incident Report Form as appropriate. Information should be treated confidentially and only passed on to others where necessary and appropriate.

Safeguarding officers have the authority to take any appropriate action they deem necessary in order to protect and safeguard young students, including taking necessary actions with respect to staff

members, group leaders or students (whether young students or adult students).

Safeguarding officers must inform the police and/or requisite social work department where there are allegations of child abuse or where there are serious suspicions of child abuse or grave concerns that child abuse may occur. Whenever in doubt, contact the authorities.

9. REVIEW

We are committed to reviewing this policy (including its schedules) and our practices on an annual basis.