

Safeguarding Newsletter



ENCOMPASS
SAFEGUARDING

Please don't tell my parents!

What information do we hold confidential and what should we share, when Child Protection concerns are involved?

“Please don't tell my Parents” I am sure that we have all heard students of all ages say this many times. Maybe they didn't get the grade they wanted (or their parents expected) or perhaps they forgot to do finish a project and don't want you to phone home.

But what happens when there are Child Protection concerns?

What if their behaviour or what has happened to them would go against what is acceptable for their parents and their community or is even against the law in your host country?

These are issues Safeguarding teams regularly have to consider.

A number of years ago, an 18yr old student was brought by a friend to see me because she had been sexually assaulted at a party over the weekend. We talked about what had happened but she was very clear.

“You can't tell my parents, they are very strict and they'll send me away. I shouldn't have even been there, I lied about going and I was drinking, they will be so angry”

I also remember working with an 11 year old year old boy who was relentlessly and quite nastily bullying some other students. After the first few times of staff talking to him, following the bullying policy and involving his parents, we realised that he was a victim of physical and emotional abuse at home. By including his parents in the discussions about his behaviour we were actually putting him at significant risk of harm and his bullying was as a direct result of his abuse.

It is important to remember that most of your students live every day negotiating many different cultural and behavioural expectations and rules. With their families, friends, teachers and in their communities.

To Tell or Not To Tell?

That is the question!

Some issues are managed by schools and teachers every single minute of every school day. It would be impossible to run any school if parents had to be contacted or informed about every little issue that happened; every playground argument, every lost pen or falling out between friends.

But where is do you draw the line?

Is the line different when there are Child Protection concerns involved and a potential risk of harm to one of your students? I think the answer is Yes (potentially), because you have a Duty of Care to your students to protect them from harm.

A few recommendations:

Explore what the child is most worried about and what is the likely risk of harm for the child by informing or not informing parents. For example, what if you find out that a 14 year old is leaving their house late at night, after their parents have gone to sleep, and is meeting up with older teens to drink or take drugs? Not telling parents could leave them at risk of a great deal of harm.

What can you do to help communication between the child and their parents?

Can you share enough of the concerns that the parents can be supportive and meet their child's needs but perhaps exclude some details?

Is there a family member, an older sibling or Auntie, who you can ask to join you when you talk to the parents?

If ultimately you decide it is in the child's best interest not to share the information, then make sure you record the decision and the thinking around it.

Testimonial

“Thank you! I thoroughly enjoyed the course. I feel very lucky to have been exposed to your expertise and experience. I feel a whole lot more confident dealing with Safeguarding in general, and soon after even delivered a staff meeting training session for our staff. I felt extremely well prepared and confident from the combination of self-learning live sessions. I am sure we will be in touch in the future.”

Nicholas Heymans, Head of Boarding

If you are struggling with this or any other Safeguarding or Child Protection issue, please reach out we are always here to support and help!

Upcoming Events

SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM



2nd Annual

Phnom Penh Safeguarding in Education Symposium

16-19 OCT '24

KEYNOTE BY:
PROF. BECKY MILNE
PORTSMOUTH UNIVERSITY, UK

- **Wed 16th** - *Safeguarding for Khmer Educators*
- **Thursday 17th** - *Pre-conference (full-day; choice of training)*
- **Friday 18th** - **Symposium**
Keynote & Workshops
- **Saturday 19th** - **Symposium**
Workshops

Building educators capacity to protect



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