Safeguarding Practices and Student Voice

How does your school include the perspective of students?

Shaping the future of international education

Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Identify factors that can help to create a safer culture in your school community
- ✓ Consider how to include student voice as you develop policies and procedures
- ✓ Identify milestones and resources that will help your community to move forward

What can help to create a safer culture in a school community?

International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP)

Our charter is to apply our collective resources, expertise, and partnerships to help international school communities address child protection challenges.

International Taskforce on Child Protection

All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.

Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.

All schools have a responsibility to build a community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for each child.

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 consideration for the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

How prevalent is child sexual abuse globally?

United States: Crimes Against Children Research Center

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse

Self-report studies: 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident

Ireland: The SAVI Report

1 of 3 girls 1 of 4 boys

How do the real risks originate?

Global Challenges for International Schools

What is the role of the school?

What is not?

Global Challenges for International Schools

ITFCP: International Collaboration

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection, UK
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, USA
- Europol
- International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
- Interpol
- Ministry of Security and Justice, Netherlands
- National Crime Agency, UK
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- U.S. Department of State and Department of Justice

90+
volunteers in
41 countries

educators doctors

lawyers

psychologists

governments INGO's

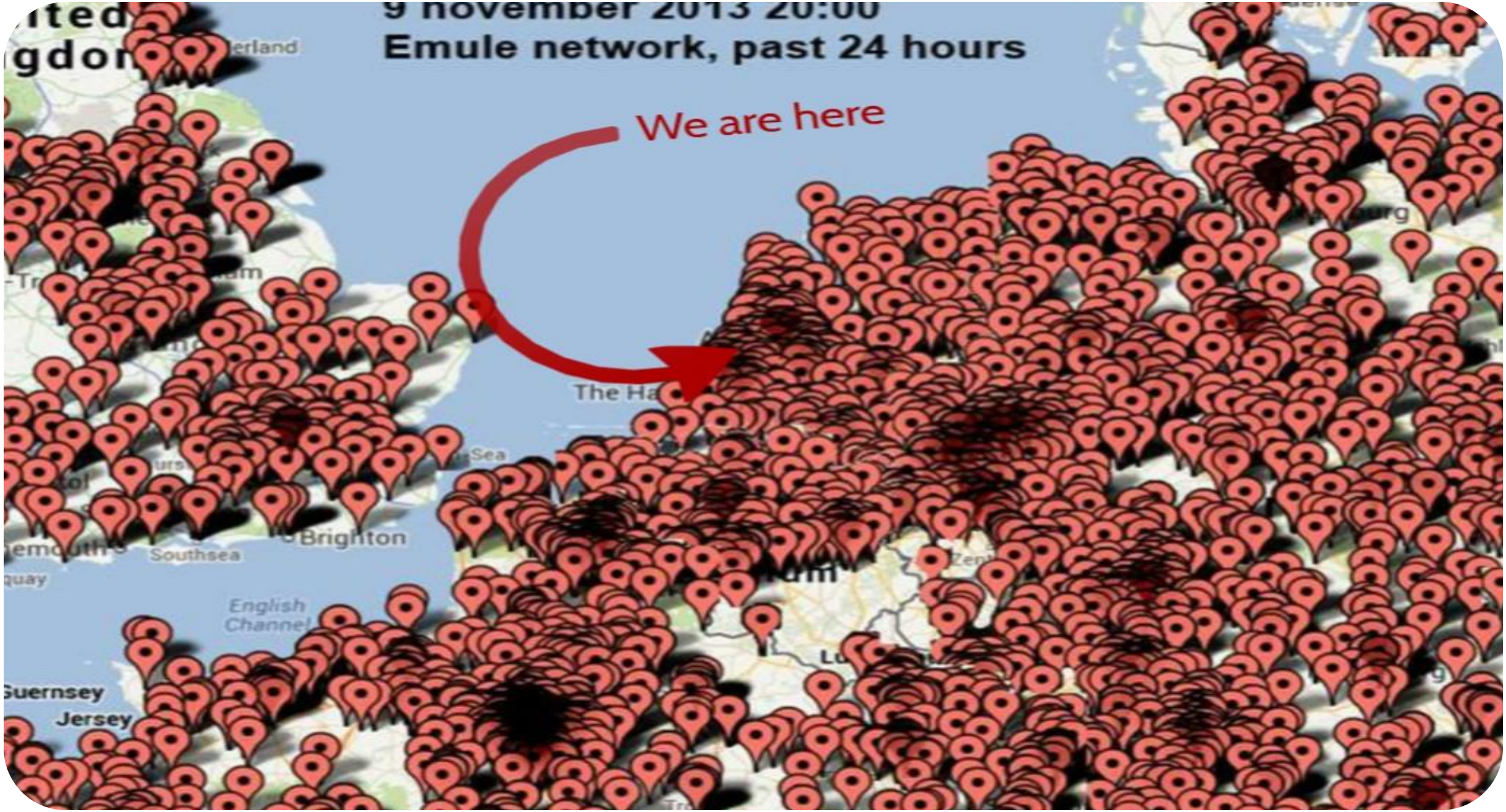
law enforcement

The “Dark Net”

The Tor Network

Software guarantees encryption and anonymity between users

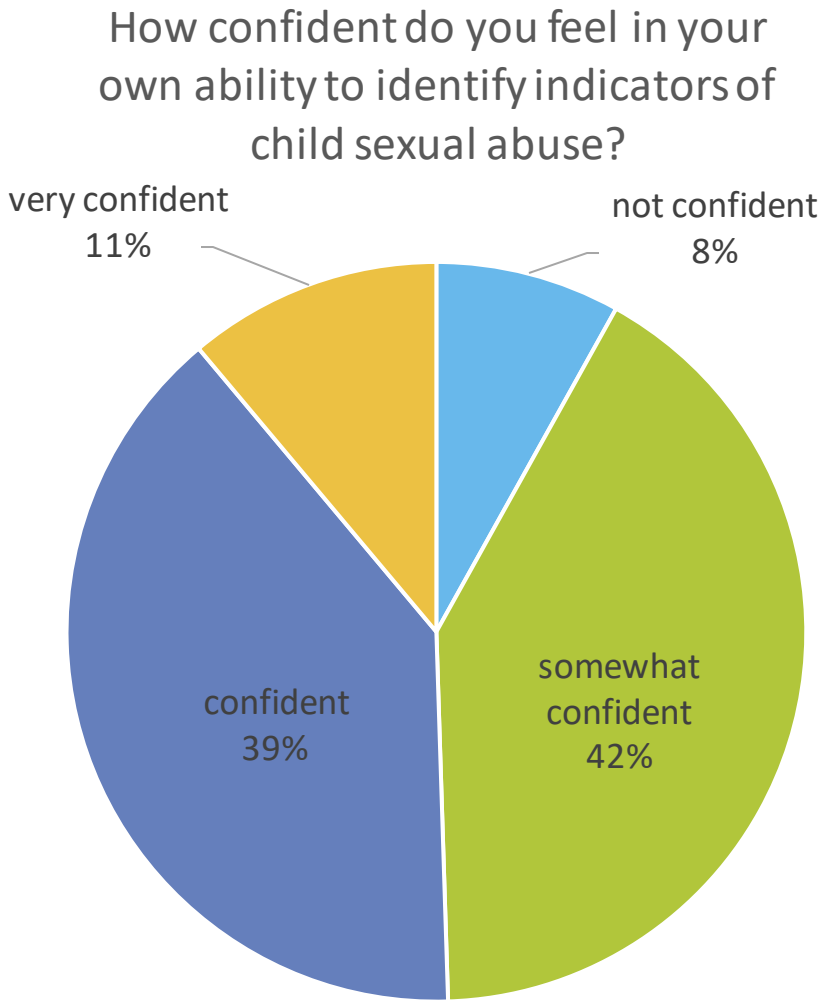
Not discoverable by search engines


9 november 2013 20:00
Emule network, past 24 hours
We are here
Brighton
Southsea
English Channel
Guernsey
Jersey

Identifying indicators of abuse

"contacts or interaction between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using fear, trickery, bribery, threats or pressure."

(UN definition of child sexual abuse)



“As a thirteen-year-old girl I was groped by both a popular teacher and coach. I tried to tell another teacher, one also admired by many of us, about the first episode; it was laughed off. After that, I never told anyone anything.”

Former Student, North America

Barriers to Identifying Abuse

What do you see as barriers to identifying and responding to possible child sexual abuse and exploitation at your school?

Cultural norms that prevent parents from discussing sexual abuse/exploitation	83%
Cultural norms that prevent students from reporting personal information	78%
Inadequate community resources for victims and families	70%
Lack of / inadequate parent training	64%
Fear that the police investigation will be ineffective	61%
Lack of / inadequate training	58%
Fear that intervention will do more harm than good	46%

SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS | JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2015

Written Policy on Child Protection

Does the school clearly indicate responsibility for child protection?

	2015	2022
Yes	68%	93%
No	32%	7%

Background Checks

To what extent are background checks conducted?

(select all that apply)

	2015	2022
In the country where school is located	43%	68%
In the country of citizenship	37%	56%
In all countries in which the candidate has lived/worked	14%	38%
In most countries in which the candidate has lived/worked	22%	27%
Other (please specify)	24%	6%

Annual Training

Does your school require annual Child Protection training?

	2015		2022	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
For leaders?	45%	55%	87%	13%
For teachers?	46%	54%	91%	9%
For other staff and contractors?	29%	71%	78%	22%
For parents?	20%	80%	31%	69%

Student Voice

Data, Guidance & Resources

2021

International Taskforce on Child Protection (ITFCP)

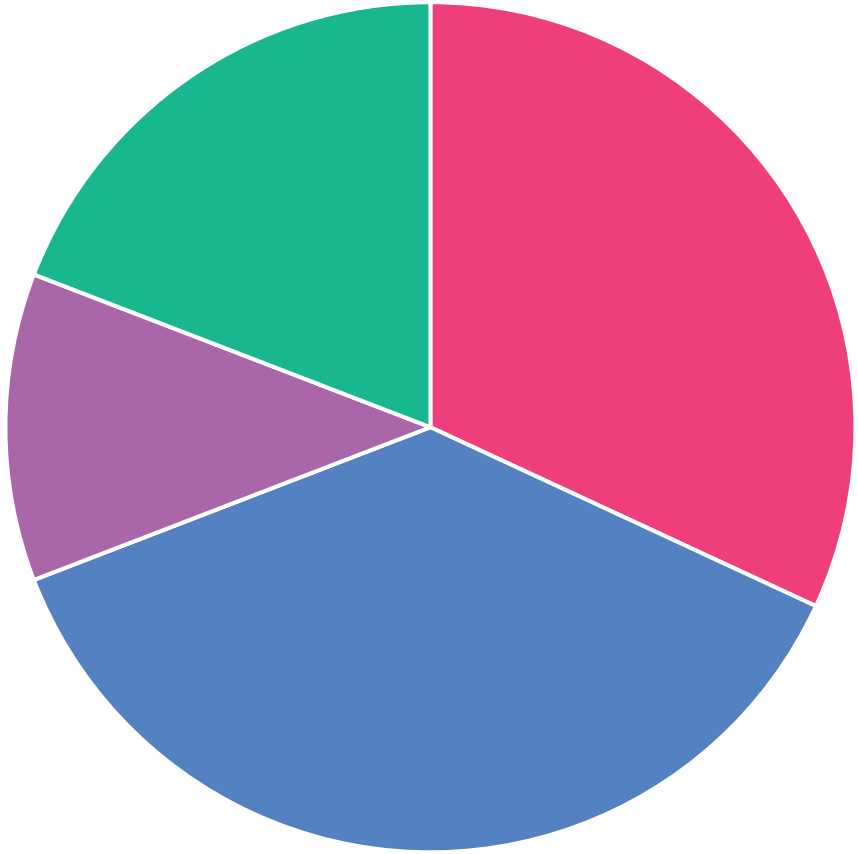
Student Voice

Survey of School Leaders

Data

Respondents

48 countries across
5 continents



Leaders from **94** international schools

Europe Asia Africa & The Middle East The Americas

Which Student Voice mechanisms does your school have in place?

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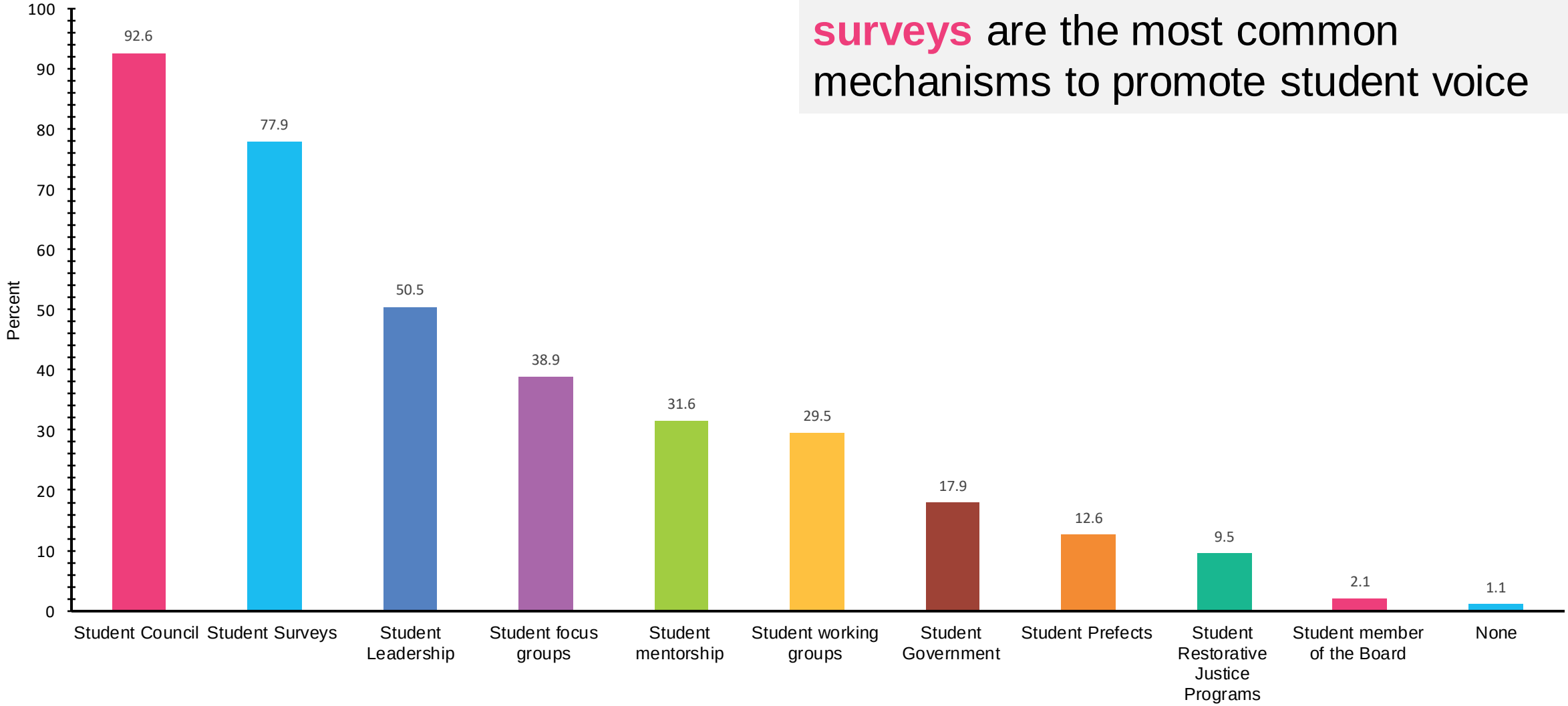
Student Council and student surveys are the most common mechanisms to promote student voice



To what extent were your students involved in the development of your school's Child Safeguarding Policy?

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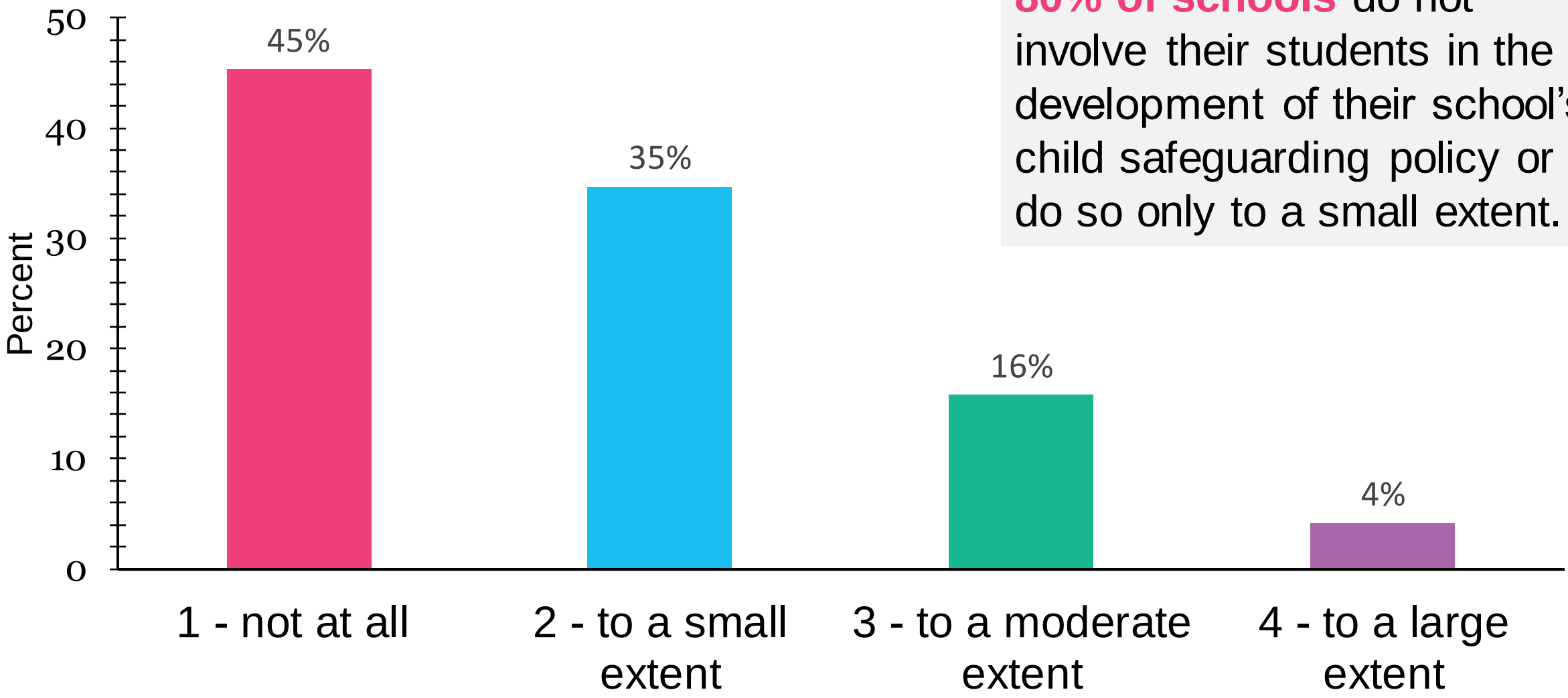

80% of schools do not involve their students in the development of their school's child safeguarding policy or do so only to a small extent.

Are your safeguarding policies in a format that students can access?

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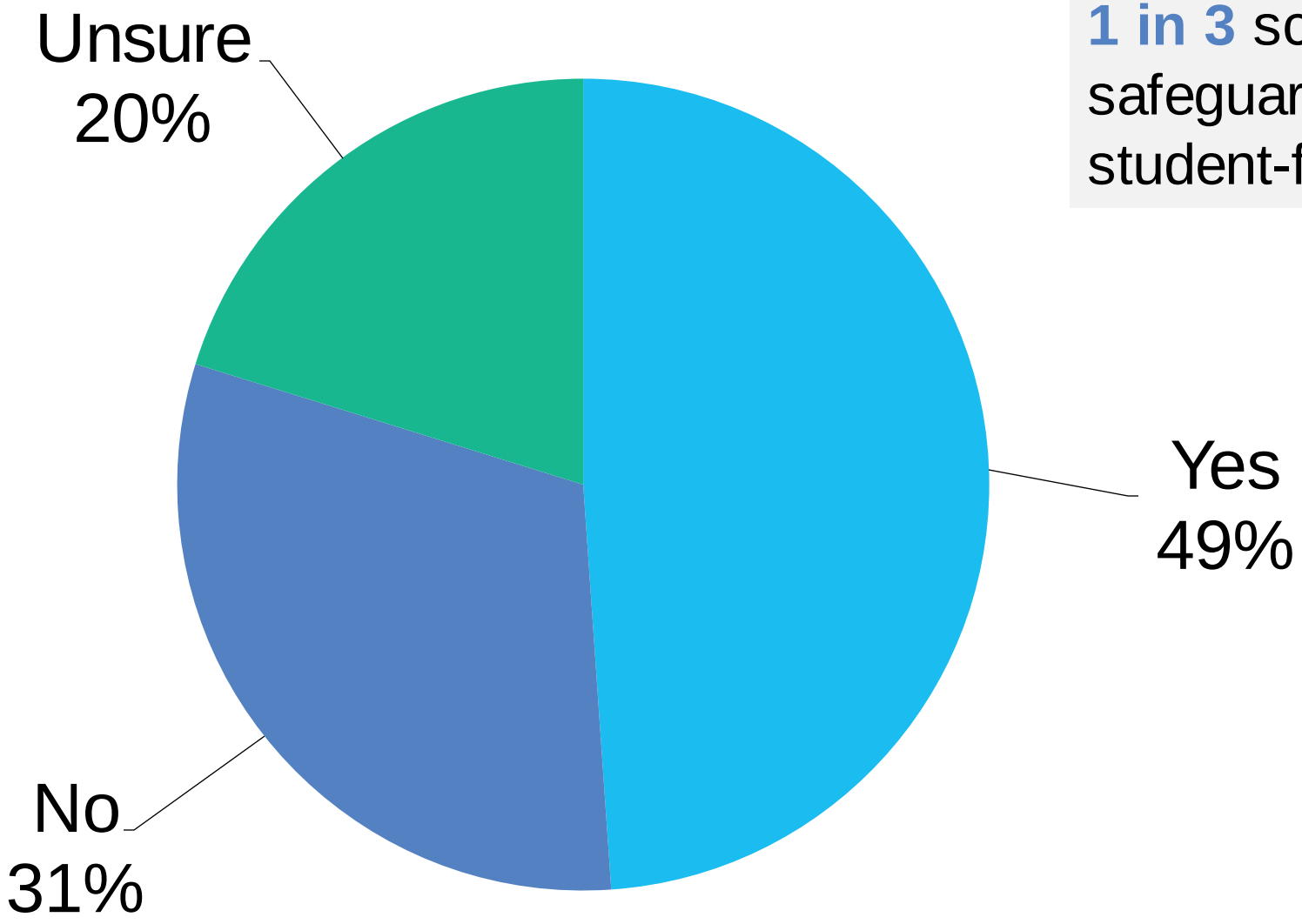


1 in 3 schools do not have safeguarding policies in a student-friendly format.

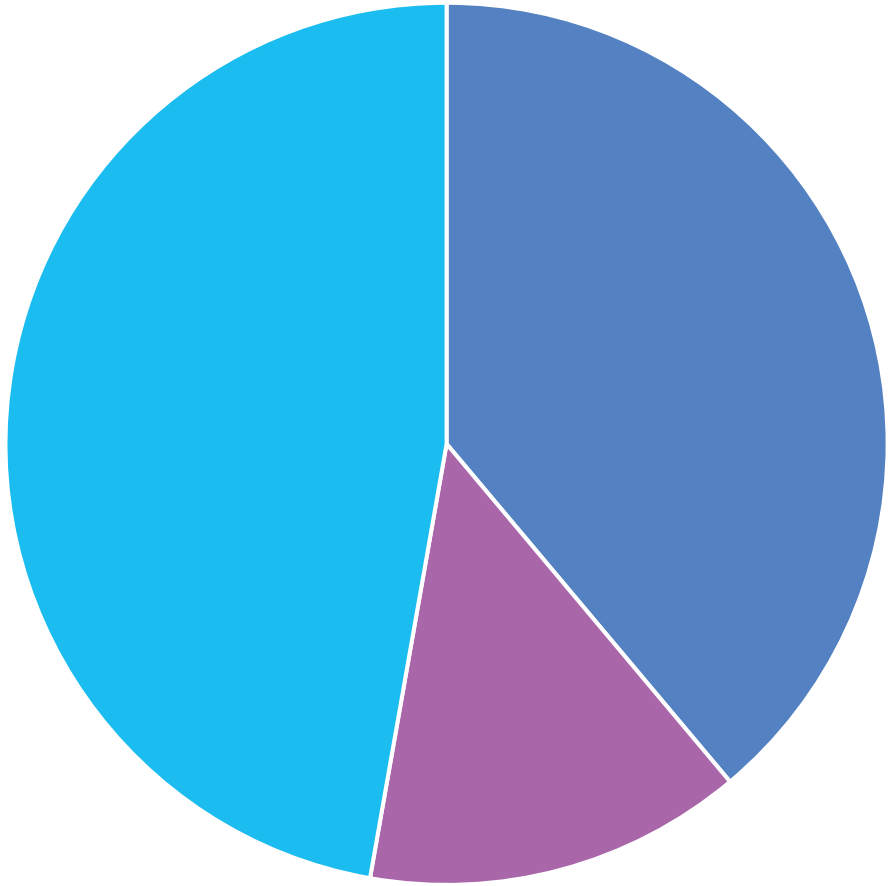
Student Engagement

Sessions

Data

Student Participants

6 engagement sessions
3 schools
2 continents



23 students
13 girls
10 boys

Learning from young people

All students said that they had never been asked for their opinion about safeguarding or what goes into the policy.

“parents and students do not read ‘boring’ policies because they are too long and contain lots of text.”

“The school’s safeguarding policies should be made simpler and should have headline paragraphs at the beginning, then people would take more notice of them, because they are easier to read.”

“Students were afraid of talking to teachers about safeguarding concerns because they said that they didn’t know how the school would respond and they were worried that teachers would talk to each other about what the students have told them.”

Learning from young people

Response

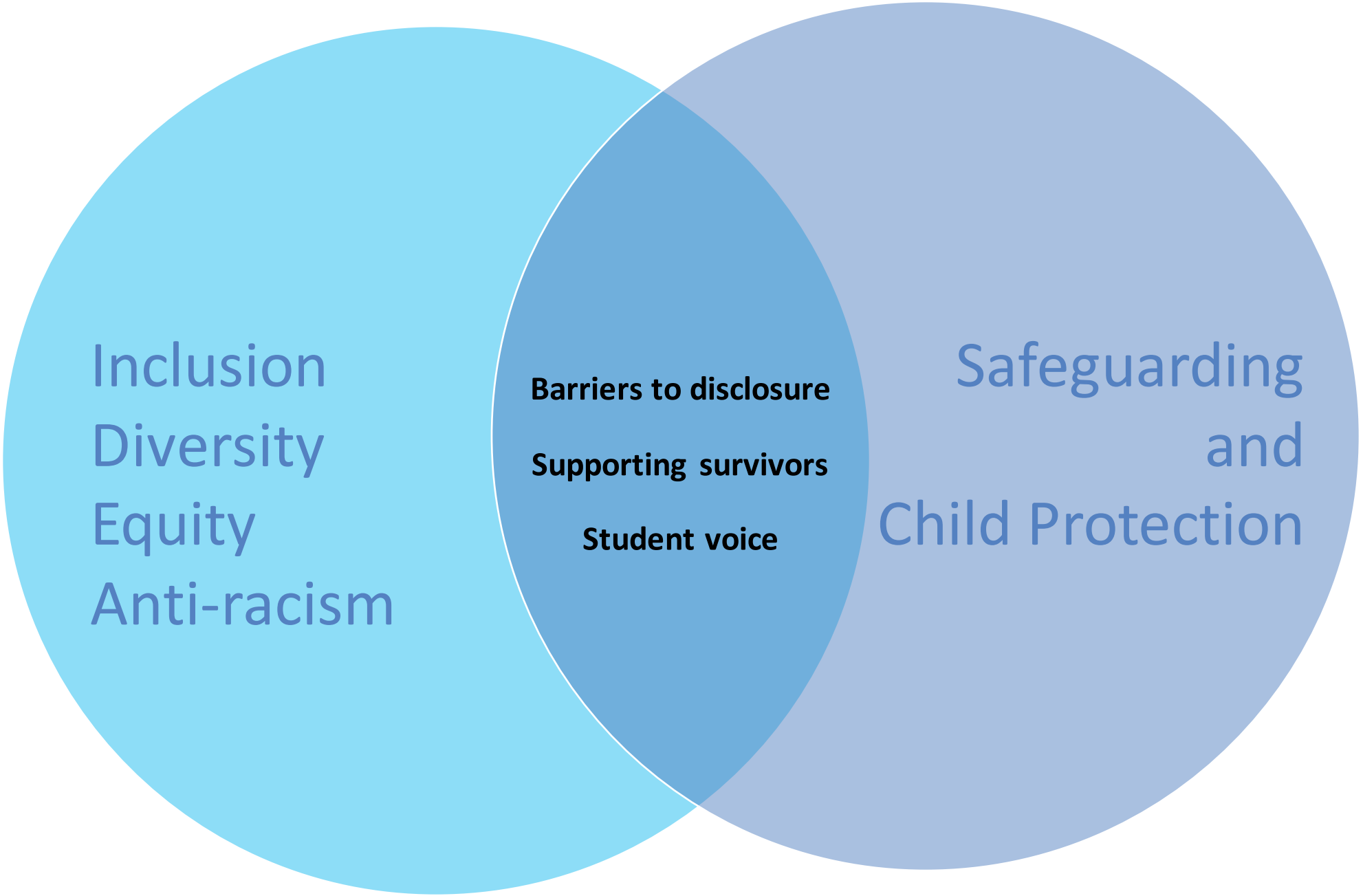
"I told my counsellor about the bullying, but not the assault. He assured me that there was nothing he could do without making it worse for me. I told him that it was more than I could handle and that it was contributing to my suicidal feelings. He told me to just have thicker skin. I never felt comfortable expressing the assault due to this assumption that there was nothing anyone could do."

Impact of education

“They teach you not to send images in the first place. So if your photo gets shared around you’re not going to speak to a teacher because they are the ones that told you not to send it.”

Confidentiality

“You would never tell a teacher, the moment you tell a teacher everyone knows.”


Inclusion
Diversity
Equity
Anti-racism
Barriers to disclosure
Supporting survivors
Student voice
Safeguarding
and
Child Protection

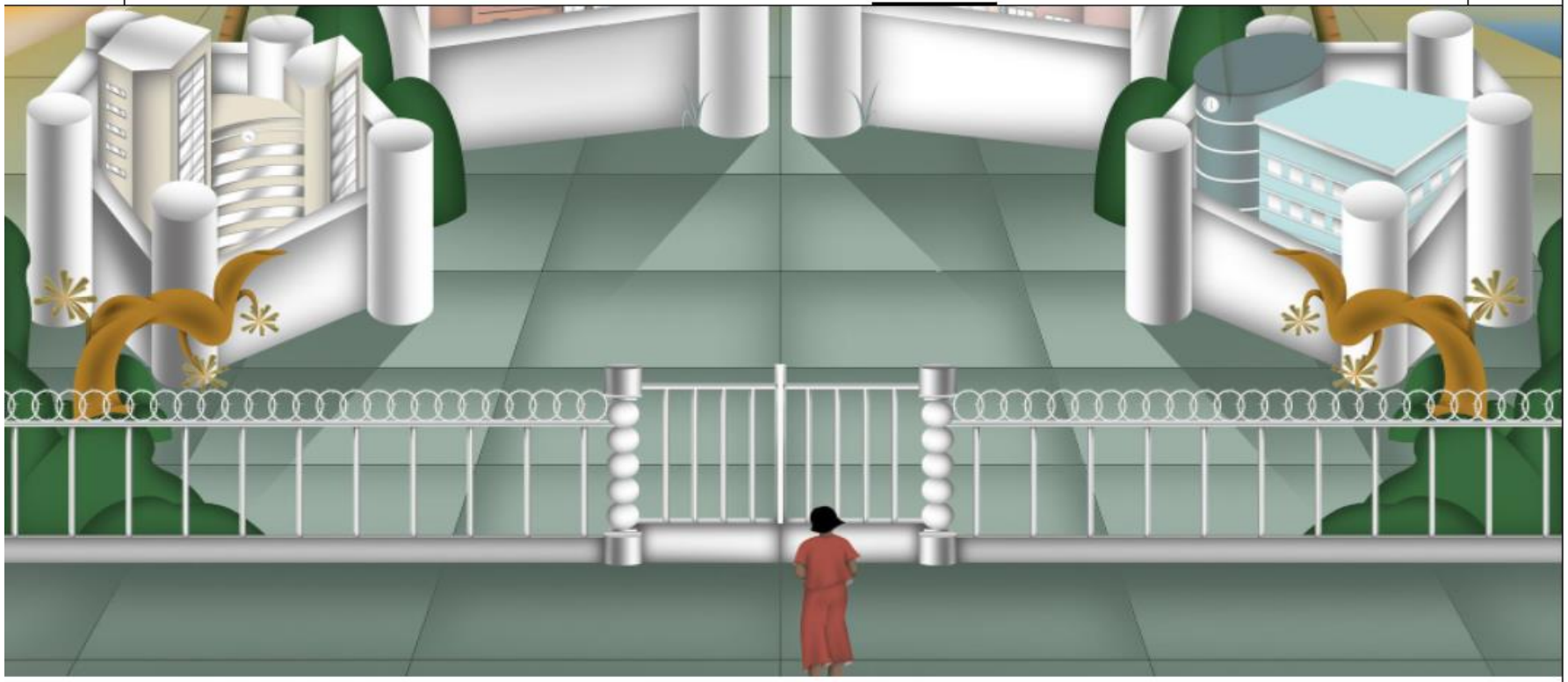


Illustration: Yue Zhang for Bloomberg Businessweek

Businessweek + Equality

Elite International Schools Have a Racism Problem

Around the world, finishing schools for the Davos class teach excellence—as long as the excellence is White, Western, and English-speaking.

By Natalie Obiko Pearson
March 4, 2022, 6:01 AM GMT+1

We needed to learn more.

What does racism and discrimination look like in your school community?

In your school, what do conversations about race sound like?

Who is/isn't having these conversations?

“The responsibility of education surrounding racism and holding more nuanced conversations often lands on us as students, primarily in hallway conversations…”

“Opening up and beginning to explicitly educate and hold conversations with students might be uncomfortable, but we would rather be uncomfortable with the reality of racism than ignorant to it.”

Students are ready for deeper discussion on discrimination and racism …as part of their formal education.

Learning from young people

Diversity, equity & inclusion

“I think in our school we have a sort of culture of acceptance. It’s really part of the values to accept difference, so I think we support each other perhaps more.”

Response

“When we are worried about something we normally talk to a houseparent or a teacher …their response is always excellent… they always listen to us… they tell us what they are going to do. They are very discreet… they always solve the problem.”

How does your school keep you safe?

- the friendship bench and unstructured time in school to make friends
- physical and operational safety measures (cameras, lanyards, guards, gates)
- digital citizenship awareness and cyber safety
- online reporting tools for bullying and safety concerns
- counsellors, counsellors, counsellors!

How does the school keep you safe?

“The peer mediator scheme [when older students are trained to support younger students with friendship difficulties] really helped me and my friend, we are more comfortable talking to our peers than an adult, it helped us find a solution.”

“We have a good culture in this school, students will stop to help other students if they are hurt.”

Does your school involve students when designing student safety policies and takes student feedback into account?

“I’ve never heard of a safeguarding policy.”

“The policies are designed for students but not with students.”

“Parents and students do not read ‘boring’ policies because they are too long and contain lots of text.”

“The school’s safeguarding policies should be shorter and should have headline paragraphs at the beginning, then people would take more notice of them, because they are easier to read.”

If you thought your school wasn't doing enough to keep students safe, would you tell a teacher or counsellor?

"Teachers are being so careful not to break rules that it makes interactions uncomfortable."

"I wouldn't talk to teachers if I had a problem because I don't trust them because I haven't had the chance to get to know them…. I would go to my friends."

"There's a contradiction because on the one hand they want a professional relationship between students and teachers but then on the other hand they are wanting you to tell them everything."

What do you think should be included in the curriculum?

“How to express our feelings.”

“What abuse is and how to stop it from happening.”

“More open dialogue about sensitive subjects like sex ed and ‘taboo’ subjects like gender and sexual identity. More information about how we can protect ourselves from our peers.”

“Smaller sessions to talk about things rather than larger information sharing settings.”

Student Voice

Committee

Guidance

Examples of student voice activities

Policy & curriculum development & training

- Presentations at safeguarding workshops for parents and younger students
- Collaboration on curriculum development
- Input into digital safety and peer-on-peer abuse policies

Safeguarding champions

- Student safeguarding committee to advise on areas of development
- Having student representatives on the school's safeguarding committee
- Training to be safety ambassadors

Examples of student voice activities

Consultation

- Survey on wellbeing and safeguarding practices
- Location mapping – asking students to map where they feel safe and unsafe; for example, on school campus or online
- Mapping harm – asking students to tell you the types of harm their friends are experiencing
- Student engagement sessions - small group discussions, typically with 4 to 8 students

Examples of areas/themes to explore in consultation activities

- Safe and unsafe spaces on school campus and online
- Levels of trust between students and staff
- How safeguarding is taught in school
- Barriers to disclosure
- Forms of harm students are experiencing

Safeguarding & Ethical Considerations

All activities are student centered.

The mindset for all activities is that the students are treated as equal to the adults in school.

No student is harmed by any activity.

No student feels pressured into participating.

Students benefit from all activities they participate in.

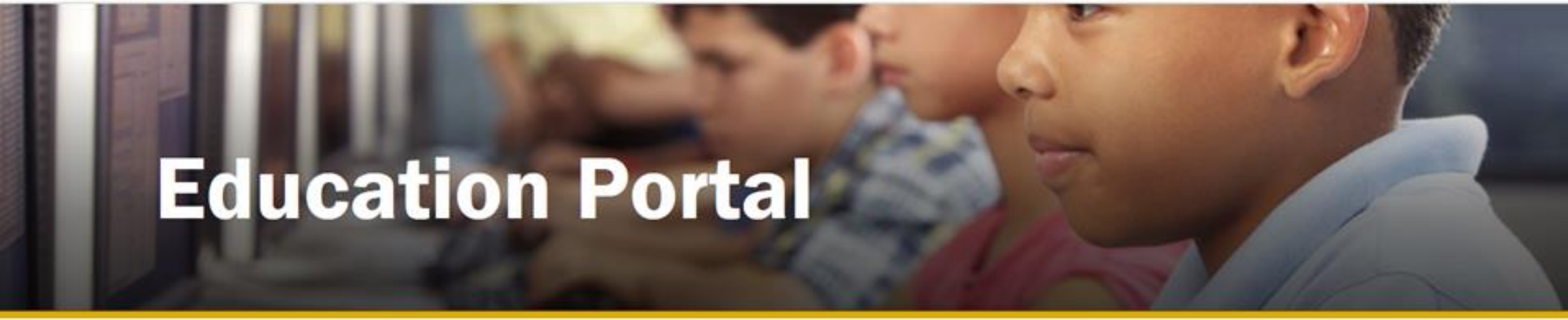
The purpose of all activities and the ways that the data will be used are clear from the outset and communicated to students.

The school reviews any data collected and considers what action to take in response to student feedback, any action taken is communicated to students.

www.icmec.org

International Centre
FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

ADVOCATE TRAIN COLLABORATE MENU



Education Portal

ICMEC and the International Task Force on Child Protection have joined forces to provide resources on how to prevent and respond to child abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation wherever you are in the world.

Resources: ICMEC Education Portal

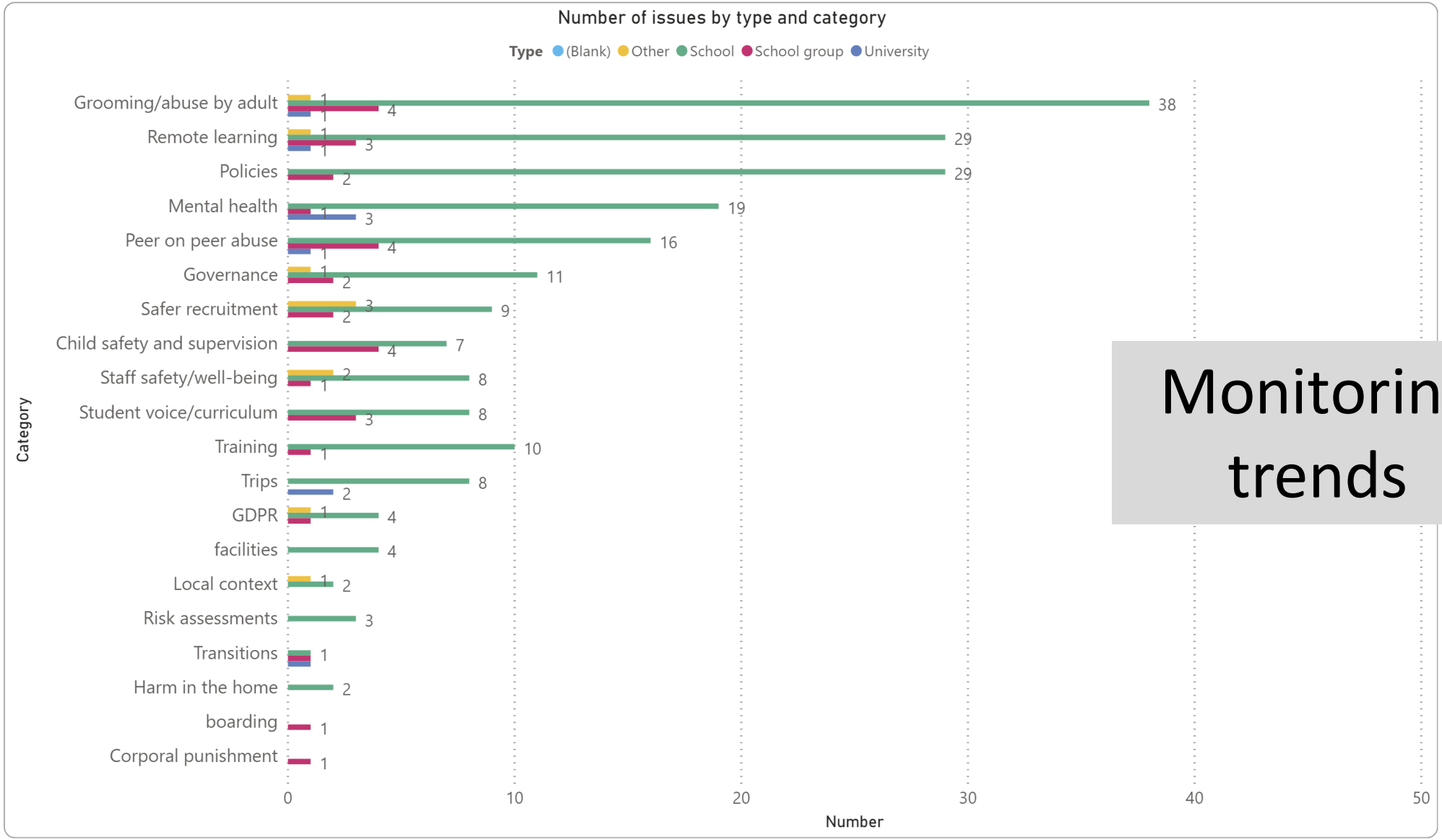
- Student Engagement Sessions – International Taskforce Example Facilitator slides
- Contextual Safeguarding Network (CSN) Resources
  - Student Engagement Sessions - Guidance on how to carry out a focus group with students
  - Student Survey Guidance
  - Student Survey Template
  - Podcast - Leading Student Focus Groups
- Preventing Peer on Peer Abuse – Mapping Exercises
- UNICEF Guidance on Ethical Research and Children

Managing allegations of abuse against educators and other adults

International Taskforce on Child Protection (ITFCP)

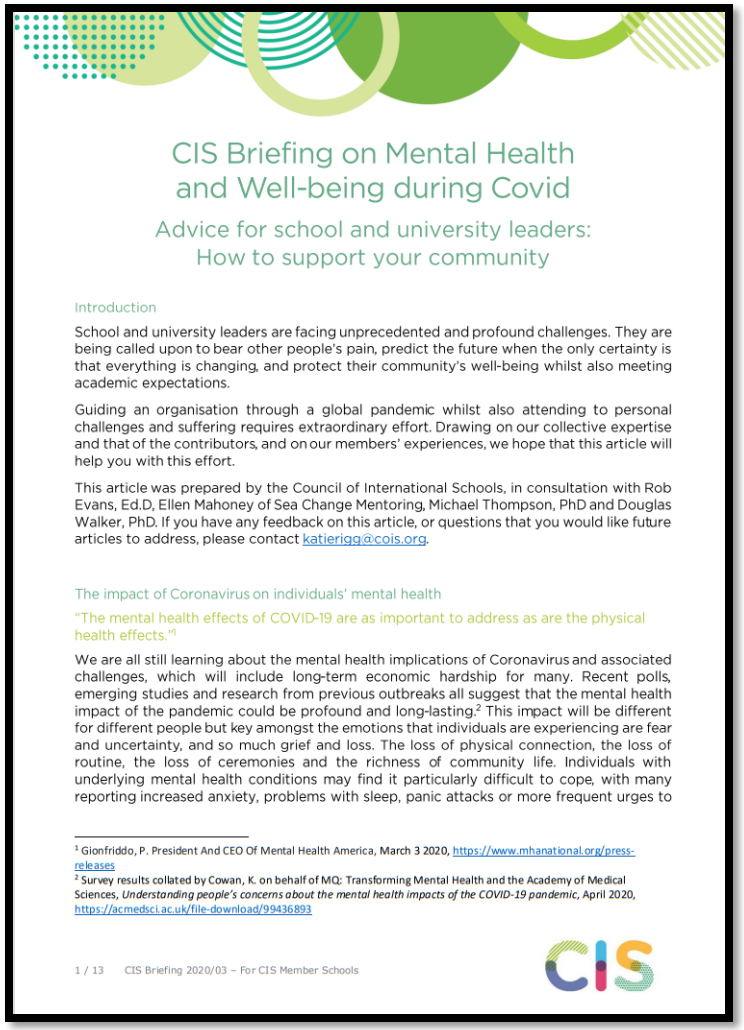
Child Protection Dashboard - II. Overview | May, 2018 - September, 2020

Anonymous summary of the different types of concerns, complaints and requests for advice received by the Executive Director and the DSL.



Monitoring trends

Resources



CIS Briefing on Mental Health and Well-being during Covid

Advice for school and university leaders: How to support your community

Introduction

School and university leaders are facing unprecedented and profound challenges. They are being called upon to bear other people's pain, predict the future when the only certainty is that everything is changing, and protect their community's well-being whilst also meeting academic expectations.

Guiding an organisation through a global pandemic whilst also attending to personal challenges and suffering requires extraordinary effort. Drawing on our collective expertise and that of the contributors, and on our members' experiences, we hope that this article will help you with this effort.

This article was prepared by the Council of International Schools, in consultation with Rob Evans, Ed.D, Ellen Mahoney of Sea Change Mentoring, Michael Thompson, PhD and Douglas Walker, PhD. If you have any feedback on this article, or questions that you would like future articles to address, please contact katierigg@cois.org.

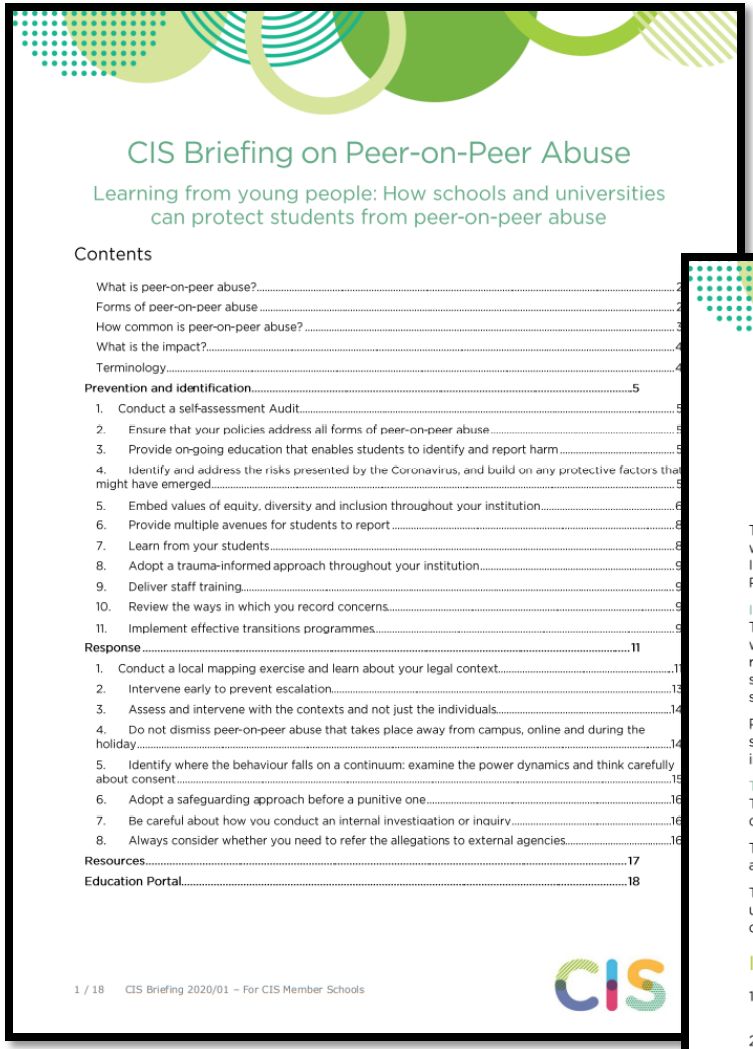
The impact of Coronavirus on individuals' mental health

"The mental health effects of COVID-19 are as important to address as are the physical health effects."[1]

We are all still learning about the mental health implications of Coronavirus and associated challenges, which will include long-term economic hardship for many. Recent polls, emerging studies and research from previous outbreaks all suggest that the mental health impact of the pandemic could be profound and long-lasting.[2] This impact will be different for different people but key amongst the emotions that individuals are experiencing are fear and uncertainty, and so much grief and loss. The loss of physical connection, the loss of routine, the loss of ceremonies and the richness of community life. Individuals with underlying mental health conditions may find it particularly difficult to cope, with many reporting increased anxiety, problems with sleep, panic attacks or more frequent urges to

[1] Gionfriddo, P. President And CEO Of Mental Health America, March 3 2020, https://www.mhanational.org/press-releases

[2] Survey results collated by Cowan, K. on behalf of MQ: Transforming Mental Health and the Academy of Medical Sciences, *Understanding people's concerns about the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic*, April 2020, https://acmedsci.ac.uk/file-download/99436893



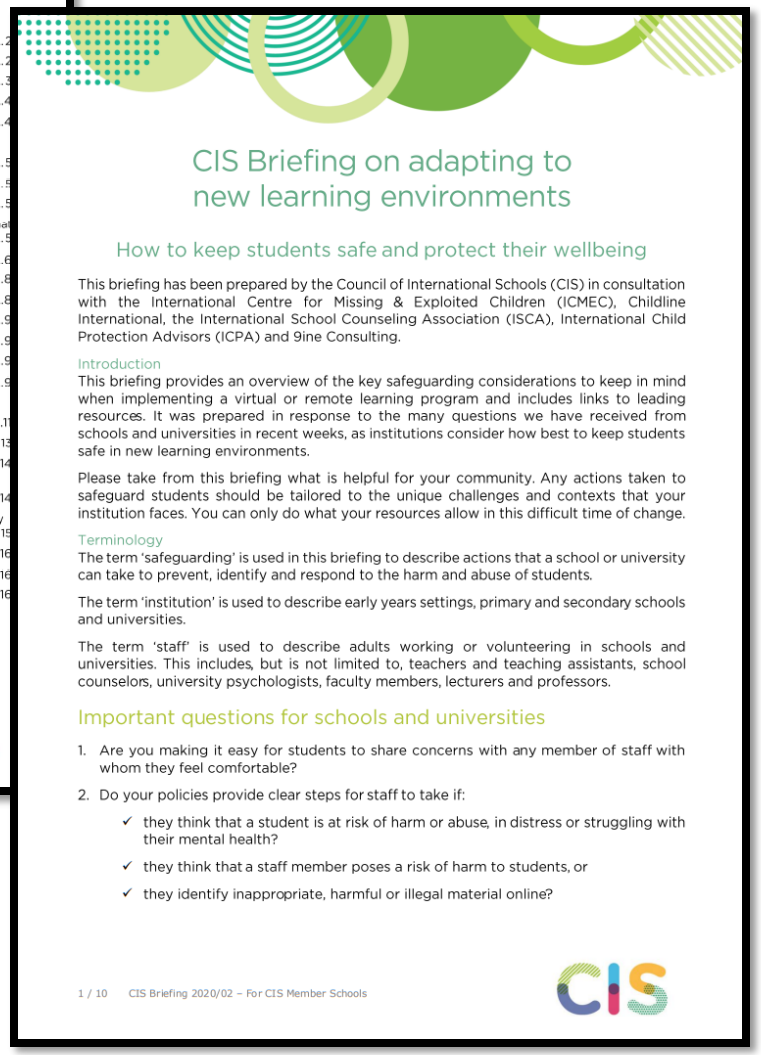
CIS Briefing on Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Learning from young people: How schools and universities can protect students from peer-on-peer abuse

Contents

What is peer-on-peer abuse? 2
Forms of peer-on-peer abuse 2
How common is peer-on-peer abuse? 3
What is the impact? 4
Terminology 4
Prevention and identification 5
1. Conduct a self-assessment Audit 5
2. Ensure that your policies address all forms of peer-on-peer abuse 5
3. Provide on-going education that enables students to identify and report harm 5
4. Identify and address the risks presented by the Coronavirus, and build on any protective factors that might have emerged 5
5. Embed values of equity, diversity and inclusion throughout your institution 6
6. Provide multiple avenues for students to report 8
7. Learn from your students 8
8. Adopt a trauma-informed approach throughout your institution 9
9. Deliver staff training 9
10. Review the ways in which you record concerns 9
11. Implement effective transitions programmes 9
Response 11
1. Conduct a local mapping exercise and learn about your legal context 11
2. Intervene early to prevent escalation 13
3. Assess and intervene with the contexts and not just the individuals 14
4. Do not dismiss peer-on-peer abuse that takes place away from campus, online and during the holiday 14
5. Identify where the behaviour falls on a continuum: examine the power dynamics and think carefully about consent 15
6. Adopt a safeguarding approach before a punitive one 16
7. Be careful about how you conduct an internal investigation or inquiry 16
8. Always consider whether you need to refer the allegations to external agencies 16
Resources 17
Education Portal 18

Available on CIS Community Portal



CIS Briefing on adapting to new learning environments

How to keep students safe and protect their wellbeing

This briefing has been prepared by the Council of International Schools (CIS) in consultation with the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), Childline International, the International School Counseling Association (ISCA), International Child Protection Advisors (ICPA) and 9ine Consulting.

Introduction

This briefing provides an overview of the key safeguarding considerations to keep in mind when implementing a virtual or remote learning program and includes links to leading resources. It was prepared in response to the many questions we have received from schools and universities in recent weeks, as institutions consider how best to keep students safe in new learning environments.

Please take from this briefing what is helpful for your community. Any actions taken to safeguard students should be tailored to the unique challenges and contexts that your institution faces. You can only do what your resources allow in this difficult time of change.

Terminology

The term 'safeguarding' is used in this briefing to describe actions that a school or university can take to prevent, identify and respond to the harm and abuse of students.

The term 'institution' is used to describe early years settings, primary and secondary schools and universities.

The term 'staff' is used to describe adults working or volunteering in schools and universities. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers and teaching assistants, school counselors, university psychologists, faculty members, lecturers and professors.

Important questions for schools and universities

1. Are you making it easy for students to share concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable?
2. Do your policies provide clear steps for staff to take if:
   - ✓ they think that a student is at risk of harm or abuse, in distress or struggling with their mental health?
   - ✓ they think that a staff member poses a risk of harm to students, or
   - ✓ they identify inappropriate, harmful or illegal material online?

THANK YOU

Shaping the future of international education