### International safeguarding standards across the education sector

### RSH Helpdesk Number 5

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| Query: What international standards, and indicators, for SEAH are currently available to the education sector? What other standards are currently used in the sector in relation to gender-based violence (GBV), violence against women and girls (VAWG) and child sexual abuse (CSA) where SEAH could be integrated? What are the current gaps in these standards specific to SEAH? How could they be strengthened and where possible, what is the scope to do so?Enquirers: Amy Grindle, FCDO Safeguarding Unit |

# Overview

Keeping children safe while in education is crucial for children’s attendance, retention, and learning, but also their wider wellbeing. It is particularly important for girls’ access to education, especially during adolescence. A number of standards and models have therefore been developed by education stakeholders to try to address different forms of violence in the education sector. This query has been commissioned to map these different initiatives and summarise existing gaps.

## Methodology

The methodology for this rapid query included visiting websites of key global education stakeholders and searches on Google.[[1]](#footnote-1) The query looked at safeguarding standards and indicators, including in relation to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH), child safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). However, as there was limited information on this, the query has also looked at models that are used in the education sector to address violence against children (VAC) including physical, emotional and sexual violence.

The query has not mapped all standards and models used by donors that are funding education initiatives or education stakeholders. Instead, standards and models included were classified into one of the following:

* **Safeguarding standards in the education sector**, for example the Girl’s Education Challenge (GEC).
* **Programming models that have been developed to address violence in the education sector**, for example the Whole School Approach to address School Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV).
* **Safeguarding standards that are not education specific, but which have relevance to the education sector due to their focus on working with children** (for example Keeping Children Safe (KCS).

Global standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA (MOS PSEA) have not been included in this report due to not being specifically focused on the education sector. However, it should be acknowledged that many safeguarding standards are based on either or both of these standards. Global child protection models that do not specifically have an education focus (such as WePROTECT) have also not been included.

## Standards and models currently used to address SEAH, GBV and VAWG in the education sector

This query identified thirteen standards and models that have relevance to the education sector. The tables below map them against education and safeguarding focus areas, their strengths and gaps in content and implementation (see Section 2 for full mapping).

**Table 1: Overview of standards included in this query**

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| Standard or model | Type | Safeguarding focus | Education focus | Proposed indicators |
| Minimum Standards for Child Protection (CPMS) in Humanitarian Action | Standards | Child protection, VAC, child safeguarding | No  | Yes |
| Council of International Schools | Standards | Child safeguarding  | Yes | Yes |
| Education Cannot Wait (ECW)[[2]](#footnote-2) | Standards | Child safeguarding  | Yes | No |
| Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) | Standards | Child safeguarding, SEAH  | Yes | No |
| Global Partnership for Education (GPE) | Standards | SEAH and other forms of misconduct | Yes | No  |
| Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) | Standards | SEAH  | Yes | Yes |
| INSPIRE | Model | VAC  | In part | Yes  |
| Safe to Learn | Call to Action | VAC, child safeguarding  | Yes | Yes |
| Whole School Approach to Addressing School Violence | Model | Child protection, SRGBV, VAC | Yes | Yes  |
| DFAT child protection and SEAH | Standards | Child protection, SEAH | No | Yes  |
| Keeping Children Safe (KCS) | Standards | Child safeguarding  | No | Yes |
| UNICEF | Standards | PSEA; Child safeguarding  | No | Yes |
| FCDO’s child and enhanced safeguarding due diligence | Standards | SEAH; Child safeguarding | No | Yes  |

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| Table 2: Overview of findings across each standard |
| Mapping of safeguarding standards by content and implementation | CPMS | Council of International Schools | GEC | GPE | INEE | INSPIRE | Safe to Learn | Whole School Approach  | DFAT  | Keeping Children Safe | UNICEF PSEA Process | FCDO’s safeguarding DD |
| Content of standards | Covers SEAH | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Takes a comprehensive view of violence, including physical, sexual and emotional violence | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ |
| Includes a focus on education systems | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  |  |
| Provides detail that is relevant to SEAH in education sector |  |  | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |  |
| Covers SEAH against adults as well as children |  |  | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |
| Underpinned by principles, goals or standards | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| Includes latest evidence |  |  |  |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ |  |  |
| Links to relevant legislation and international instruments | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Provides relevant reference tools and resources  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| Implementation of standards | Recommends a ‘whole of school’ approach that addresses organisational culture in schools/education systems |  | ✔ | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  |  |
| Includes a policy/other form of written commitment |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating violence and abuse  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Code of conduct on safeguarding, SEAH or other forms of violence  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Training for all staff | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Awareness raising to change attitudes, behaviours and norms around SEAH, GBV or VAC.  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| Supports children’s participation and empowerment | ✔ | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  | ✔ |
| Risk assessment and management (including use of M&E)  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
|  | Includes recommendations around addressing risks for groups at high risk of SEAH in education sector | ✔ |  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  | ✔ |

**Challenges in relation to the standards**

Current gaps in the standards specific to SEAH include:

* **Sector-wide standards:** Several standards include guidance on SEAH that is relevant to those working in the education sector, but standards are often focused on specific types of educational contexts (e.g. international schools, humanitarian contexts) and not well linked together. Standards also vary in their applicability to different actors in the sector, for example, some are aimed at whole of organisation (e.g. KCS), some at the programme-level (e.g. INEE), and some at grantees from global funds (e.g. GEC, GPE).
* **Forms of violence**: There is inconsistency in how the standards apply to different forms of violence and abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) that occur in the education sector. **SEAH and corporal punishment**[[3]](#footnote-3) are gaps in some of the standards, as are the links between them despite evidence showing that different forms of violence in the education sector are closely connected (Know Violence in Childhood, 2017). Only one of the standards mentions the risks of **grooming** (FCDO’s child safeguarding due diligence), and none provide guidance on how the education sector should address grooming of students, online or offline, with the intention of preventing sexual abuse or exploitation.
* **Lack of consistent definitions:** Definitions of violence and abuse vary between standards, as does the use of terminologies. For example, standards use terms such as child protection and child safeguarding in an inconsistent way, which can create confusion.
* **Level of detail on SEAH that is relevant to the education sector**: Although several standards mention SEAH or include a focus on the education sector, few provide detailed guidance that is relevant to SEAH in the education sector. The two most detailed standards are aimed at grantees on the GEC and GPE.
* **SEAH against teachers and staff**: Although most of the standards include a focus on keeping children safe in education, only three covered the risks of SEAH against teachers and other staff working in the education sector. This is despite growing evidence that teachers often experience SEAH from students or other staff, particularly younger, newly qualified staff in secondary and tertiary education (e.g. research from Swaziland by Celumusa and Mabuza, 2020). Many safeguarding measures in education have been directed exclusively towards children rather than teaching personnel, probably because safeguarding did not include sexual harassment of staff until a couple of years ago.
* **Tertiary education**: This query was unable to find international standards or frameworks specific to SEAH in higher education or in technical education and vocational training (TVET), although national or institution-specific standards exist. The current standards focus on primary and secondary education, particularly those standards that are focused on child protection for students under 18 years.
* **Online / remote education**: Guidance on keeping students and teachers safe from SEAH during online learning is a current gap in the standards reviewed for this query. In 2020, more than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries were affected by school closures during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (Li and Lilani, 2020), not to mention the millions of students in tertiary education, leading to a rapid, unplanned move to remote education. The sudden shift has highlighted the safeguarding risks associated with online learning, for example around virtual tutoring and video conferencing tools.[[4]](#footnote-4) Safe to Learn (2020) has produced a short 2-page note for education ministries with guidance on how schools can provide a safe online learning experience (e.g. providing access to online counselling and helplines; advising children not to connect to their teachers or virtual classrooms from bedrooms; not using private student-teacher instant messaging). In the UK, new legislation on children’s protection online with an Age Appropriate Design Code[[5]](#footnote-5) – the first statutory code of practice of its kind globally – could serve as best practice for children’s safety and rights online.
* **At-risk groups:** Only half the existing standards and models include recommendations for addressing risks for groups at high risk of SEAH in the education sector. Typically, this guidance is in relation to students with disabilities. However, there is very little (or no) mention of SEAH against students belonging to ethnic, linguistic, indigenous or race minorities, or on SEAH based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender-identity.
* **Whole-school approaches that tackle the underlying norms and organisational cultures** that perpetuate SEAH and other forms of violence, such as the normalisation of violent behaviour, gender inequality and abuse of power. FCDO uses a Theory of Change for addressing school violence which sets out a ‘whole school+’ approach and acknowledges the need for strong leadership and taking a multi-stakeholder approach. Less than half the standards reviewed recommend a ‘whole-school’ approach that addresses organisational culture in schools/education systems.
* **Children’s participation and/or empowerment**: Although several of the standards note the importance of children’s participation in the design and implementation of safeguarding mechanisms, guidance on child participation is missing from five of the standards reviewed.
* **Lack of agreed indicators specifically on SEAH in the education sector:** Indicators vary widely between the standards, making comparisons in data collection difficult. The lack of standardised indicators also contributes to a gap in the evidence on ‘what works’ best to address SEAH in the education sector.

**Opportunities for strengthening standards**

The current landscape of standards and models have elements that are relevant and applicable to those working to prevent and respond to SEAH and other forms of violence and abuse in the education sector. However, there are no clear minimum standards which are easily accessible and applicable to SEAH across the education sector. It is evident from the above section that there are gaps in the current international standards for SEAH that may benefit from being strengthened.

Three options for strengthening standards include:

**Option 1: Strengthen implementation of a combination of existing standards.** One option is to support the improved implementation of a combination of standards and models, for example, the whole school approach together with the IASC or Core Humanitarian Standards on PSEA. Considering the multitude of existing initiatives that address various forms of violence in the education sector, this option may help focus resources on implementation as opposed to strengthening political commitment. To strengthen implementation, a short brief or tool could be produced for organisations working in the education sector, with accompanying capacity building activities (e.g. webinars). The tool could focus on providing advice on how to navigate and implement existing standards, how to adapt to specific contexts, and how to strengthen inclusive approaches to addressing SEAH for students and staff facing multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. based on disability, sexuality, gender identity and ethnicity). Guidance could also be provided that specifically unpacks how a combination of standards/models could be applied to areas where there are gaps, such as tertiary or remotely delivered education services.

**Option 2: Adapt and update existing standards to integrate SEAH.** A second option is to work closely with others in the sector to address the gaps highlighted in the section above. Several of the standards have been recently updated, for example the Minimum Standards for Child Protection (CPMS) in Humanitarian Action were updated in 2019 to include the INSPIRE strategies. However, it should be noted that the process of updating standards is not an easy short-cut; the 2019 update of CPMS took two years and involved consultations with over 1,900 individuals in 17 countries. With this option, it would be important to also look at ways of raising awareness about the currently available standards within the sector, how they can be used, and push for greater consistency, for example with commonly agreed indicators on SEAH in the education sector. Any updates to the existing standards would also need to clearly consider contextualisation of the standards to allow for differences in financial and human resources within countries education systems as well as social norms.

**Option 3: Work with international partners to develop a specific global standard and indicators for SEAH in the education sector**. Further work would be needed to identify what sector standards for SEAH in education would look like, due to variations within the sector (e.g. primary/secondary/tertiary, online), the different actors involved and the various contexts that education services are delivered within. It would be important that any efforts to develop new standards for the sector take into consideration the voices of stakeholders from the global south and builds on the wider localisation agenda that is currently being pursued in the development/humanitarian sector.

It is beyond the scope of this rapid 6-day RSH helpdesk query to make an informed recommendation between the different options for whether to strengthen standards and indicators on SEAH in the education sector. To do so, a comprehensive policy mapping, involving interviews with stakeholders in the education sector, is recommended in order to assess the feasibility of different options and identify entry points for strengthening standards. Key questions could include:

* What would be the benefit and drawback of developing new standards?
* What would a sector-specific standard on SEAH in education look like and include?
* What are the risks (and benefits) of creating a specific global standard for SEAH in the education sector, given the linkages with other forms of violence and when physical violence (i.e. corporal punishment) remains one of the most prevalent forms of abuse that children experience in the education sector?

# Mapping of standards and models

## Safeguarding standards in education

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| Minimum Standards for Child Protection (CPMS) in Humanitarian Action  |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child protection, VAC, child safeguarding |
| Description | The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is a global, interagency group which sets standards and provides technical support to ensure that efforts to protect children from violence and exploitation are of high quality and effective. The Child Protection Minimum Standards (CPMS) establish common principles; strengthen coordination between actors; improve the quality, impact and accountability of child protection programming, and strengthen advocacy and communication on child protection risks, needs and responses.[[6]](#footnote-6) Although the CPMS are designed to set standards for child protection generally, there is a specific standard related to protecting children in education, which includes child safeguarding.* Pillar 1 of the standards provide a foundation and include how to **recruit staff safely** who work on child protection services, designing child protection services using **effective programme management approaches**, **coordinating** with key stakeholders and ensuring robust and **safe information management.**
* Pillar 2 provides detailed standards for different **child protection risks and issues**, how to identify these and develop strategies for addressing them. This includes sexual and gender-based violence.
* Pillar 3 details **appropriate and good quality response strategies** which are focused on family and community strengthening, alternative care, case management and justice.
* Pillar 4 provides the standards for integrating child protection across sectors, including education. The **education standard within Pillar 4 refers to and complements the INEE standards.**

*NB. Cf. Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility et al. (2020) for practical complementarity between CPMS and INSPIRE on VAC.[[7]](#footnote-7)* |
| Strengths | Content of standards* Based on **international human rights law**, humanitarian law and refugee law including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
* **Comprehensive set of standards for child protection** which identify in detail the nature of child protection risks and strategies for addressing these.
* **Explicit links between child protection and the provision of quality, safe education services.**
* **Based on principles** which include best interests, child participation and enhancing people’s safety.
* Each standard provides **indicators to measure** whether the standard is being implemented effectively.

Implementation of standards* The standards are **widely used by actors working in humanitarian response**.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* **Comprehensiveness of the standards may be daunting** for smaller or lesser resourced organisations to implement (handbook is around 290 pages on the standards and how to implement them).

Implementation of standards* Organisations **might lack clarity on where to start** with implementing the standards.
* Standards **suggest a dichotomy between development and humanitarian contexts** which may not always be relevant or appropriate i.e. standards could be used in both contexts.
 |
| Example indicators | Example standards:* Ensure education and child protection staff/actors have signed and been trained on safeguarding procedures and policies.
* Develop teacher training curricula that support more protective learning environments.

Example measurement indicators:* % of non-formal/formal learning centres surveyed in target location that meet 100% of agreed-upon safety criteria, universal design standards.
* % of education staff who demonstrate knowledge of participatory, inclusive, positive discipline and gender-sensitive approaches (aligning with child protection and education minimum standards adapted in-country).
* # and % of safe and ethical referrals of children to child protection services made by education workers.
* % of educational facilities with a child-friendly, safe, and confidential feedback and reporting mechanism in place.
* % of active-duty education personnel that have signed the code of conduct at their respective learning centre.
 |
| Sources | The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019); Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility et al. (2020) <https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home> |

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| Council of International Schools New School Evaluation Standards  |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child safeguarding  |
| Description | The Council for International Schools (CIS) is a membership community which works collaboratively to shape international education through professional services to schools, higher education institutions, and individuals. The CIS safeguarding standards have been developed in three areas: * School Evaluation Standards
* School Recruitment Standards
* School Policies and Resources

The School Evaluation Standards are articulated in two distinct domains: 13 Essential Questions which should be comprehensively considered, and which form the basis of whole school community dialogue on policies and practices related to safeguarding and child protection; and 18 Expectations which school evaluation, accreditation and inspection agencies are strongly encouraged to adopt. The latter are structured around the same standard headings as Keeping Children Safe: Policy, People, Procedures and Accountability. CIS has also produced a briefing on keeping students safe online.  |
| Strengths | Content of standards* **Scope of standards covers what a school would typically need** to have in place to prevent and respond to child abuse.
* Standards similar to **Keeping Children Safe** standards but **adapted for the school environment.**

Implementation of standards* Standards designed to be **used by schools and the agencies that monitor** schools.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* A series of statements or questions but with **little guidance, tools or resources** on how to ensure these statements or questions are implemented or can be answered respectively.

Implementation of standards* Standards are **recommended for use**, rather than mandated.
* **Lack of detail on how to implement** the standards e.g. what are rigorous recruitment procedures, how should measures be integrated into all procedures and systems.
 |
| Example indicators | * The school has specific child protection policies, practices and faculty and staff training programmes to ensure the safety and welfare of all students within boarding facilities, homestay and residential arrangements and on excursions, trips and students exchanges.
* The school has recruitment policies and execute rigorous recruitment procedures that ensure all employees and volunteers are of sound moral character and are suitable people to work with children and young adults.
* The school has developed and adopted a code of conduct and written guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults towards children and children towards other children.
* The school has developed structured procedures for reporting suspected or disclosed maltreatment or abuse.
* Child protection measures are integrated with all procedures and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme management, performance management, procurement, partner agreements, risk management and management systems etc.)
 |
| Sources | Council of International Schools (2020) <https://www.cois.org> |

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| Education Cannot Wait Child Safeguarding Minimum Standards  |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child safeguarding, PSEA  |
| Description | The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Secretariat and Fund are hosted by UNICEF and ECW therefore operates under UNICEF's regulatory regimes for child safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). ECW also has child safeguarding standards for all its grantees but these are not specified on their website. In addition, ECW’s grantees are expected to implement the following: * INEE Minimum Standards where possible
* The Safe Schools Declaration[[8]](#footnote-8)
* CPMS
* IASC guidance for humanitarian action – including Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.
 |
| Strengths | * No assessment of ECW’s child safeguarding standards is possible due to not being available online.
* See assessment of UNICEF’s standards below.
 |
| Gaps | * No assessment of ECW’s child safeguarding standards is possible due to not being available online.
* See assessment of UNICEF’s standards below.
 |
| Example indicators | No mandatory reporting indicators in relation to safeguarding.  |
| Sources | Education Cannot Wait <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/home/information-for-grantees-2/?cp_operations=1>  |

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| Girls’ Education Challenge Safeguarding Standards  |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child safeguarding, SEAH |
| Description | The GEC has one of the most comprehensive approaches to addressing SEAH and child safeguarding issues across grantees. The approach is based on 14 minimum standards that all grantees are assessed against. These were originally based on Keeping Children Safe’s standards but have gone through a number of adaptations over the years, including also now corresponding to FCDO’s enhanced safeguarding due diligence. The current standards are not available online.  |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* **Comprehensive standards** that look at policy, procedures, reporting, response, human resources including training of staff, raising awareness in communities, risk management and governance and accountability.
* The standards cover **children, adults and at-risk groups**.
* The standards take a **comprehensive approach to violence** and includes SEAH but also other forms of violence such as emotional and physical violence including bullying.
* Within the standards the GEC also includes guidance for grantees to look at **programming risks**.
* All **sub-contractors** are also required to meet the GEC standards.
* Standards can be **applied to a wide set of organisations**, including both organisations that are directly running education facilities or those that are funding or providing technical assistance only.

Implementation of standards* GEC **assesses compliance** with the standards of all organisations that receive GEC funding even for sub-grantees.
* GEC requires **evidence of implementation** of standards to ensure organisations are actively implementing them before funding is provided.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* The **standards are not gender and socially inclusive** (GESI) in the way they are currently framed. However, the GEC supports grantees to apply a GESI approach to how they are implemented through their dedicated support and through its accompanying guidance material.
 |
| Example indicators | GEC’s safeguarding due diligence forms and action plans set out a number of questions that assesses whether an organisation meet each of the components that make up the 14 standards.  |
| Sources | GEC Alliance consultation |

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| Global Partnership for Education Grants Agents Minimum Standards |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | SEAH and other forms of misconduct  |
| Description | GPE has developed seven standards for its grant agents to meet in relation to safeguarding. The standards address abuse, violence or exploitation targeted at children, staff and other beneficiaries. There is not yet an overarching safeguarding policy for GPE. |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* The standards cover an entity’s staff, its representatives, staff of partner organizations and vendors implementing project activities.
* **Safeguards children, staff and beneficiaries** from SEAH (though see gap below regarding lack of clarity of what forms of violence are actually included).
* The standards include mention of the need for **policy and procedures**, whistleblower protection, independent investigations, awareness raising, reporting mechanisms and regular monitoring of implementation.

Implementation of standards* Organisations are **assessed before funding is provided**.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* The standards **do not define ‘abuse, violence and exploitation’** so it is unclear what exactly is covered within the standards. However, as the heading specifies that this is SEAH it could be assumed that physical and emotional forms of violence are not included.
* The standards do not cover **governance and accountability** including any designated focal points or senior staff appointed to ensure implementation across an organisation.
* The standards make **no mention of the drivers of SEAH** and other forms of abuse or any recommendations around the importance of **organisational culture or diversity.**
* The standards are **not gendered or socially inclusive**.
* No reference is made to **vetting and other key human resources functions** such as disciplinary procedures.
* The standards specifies that objective investigations are needed and that whistleblowers are protected, but there is **no mention of supporting survivors of violence** that come forward.
 |
| Example indicators | Not available  |
| Sources | Global Partnership for Education <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2019-08-GPE-grant-agents-minimum-standards-EN.pdf>  |

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| Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery |
| Type | Standards |
| Focus | Child safeguarding, SEAH |
| Description | INEE is a global membership network working within a development and emergencies framework on the right to education. There are 19 Minimum Standards for Education which are designed to enhance the quality, and ensure accountability in the provision, of education services. The standards include:* Foundational standards
* Access and learning environment
* Teaching and learning
* Teachers and other education personnel
* Education policy

Measures to safeguard children and adults (teachers etc.) are integrated across these.  |
| Strengths | Content of standards* Standards are derived from the Sphere Project’s Humanitarian Charter which is based on the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law.
* **Standards are comprehensive**, in terms of the design and delivery of quality education, the detail in each standard (indicator(s), key actions and guidance notes for implementation) and the applicability to a range of stakeholders involved in education.
* **Do No Harm principle is explicit.**
* Covers **safety of learners** as well as **teachers and other education personnel.**
* Emphasis on **understanding the context** and impact of **intersecting identities on learners’ access to education.**

Implementation of standards* Foundational standards guide organisations on **collaboration and coordination** within the education sector and with the protection sector.
* **Assessments should be made of the context and the risks that might arise** from the provision of education and these assessments should be done in a participatory way with communities and other stakeholders.
* Access, learning environment, teaching and other personnel standards detail what is needed to ensure **that education services are delivered safely**, that teachers are qualified and also **recruited and managed with appropriate safeguards** in place and that teachers and other education personnel can **report and refer concerns about children to appropriate authorities and services.**
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* **Comprehensiveness of the standards may be daunting** for smaller or lesser resourced organisations to implement (handbook is around 110 pages on the standards and how to implement them).
* Not always clear that the standards could be used in development and humanitarian contexts.

Implementation of standards* **Guidance for a number of standards is detailed** (code of conduct behaviours), **but in other areas less** so e.g. references.
* Organisations may also need **tools and resources** to implement the standards fully which are **not included or referenced** in the standards.
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| Example indicators | * Education assessments are conducted in a holistic, transparent and participatory manner, including a risk analysis of the context, including risks specific to sex, age, disability, ethnic background etc.
* Response strategies include strategies to overcome barriers to education, considering a principle of Do No Harm.
* Learning environments are secure and safe, and promote the protection of learners, teachers and other education personnel.
* Teachers and other education personnel are linked to health, nutrition, psychosocial and protection services.
* Curricula for providing formal and non-formal education are appropriate to the particular context and needs of learners.
* Appropriately qualified teachers/education personnel are recruited through a participatory and transparent process, including a code of conduct for recruitment; and checking of references where possible.
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| Sources | <https://inee.org/system/files/resources/INEE_Minimum_Standards_Handbook_2010%28HSP%29_EN.pdf>  |

## Programming models to address violence in the education sector

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| INSPIRE Seven Strategies for Ending VAC  |
| Type | Model  |
| Focus | VAC  |
| Description | The INSPIRE (**I**mplementation and enforcement of laws, **N**orms and values, **S**afe environments, **P**arents and caregiver support, **I**ncome and economic strengthening, **R**esponse and support services, **E**ducation and life skills) strategies are a set of evidence-based interventions to address VAC generally. One of the seven strategies is on education and life skills. This focuses on the following:* Increase enrolment in pre-school, primary and secondary schools
* Establish a safe and enabling school environment
* Improve children’s knowledge about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves against it
* Life and social skills training
* Adolescent intimate partner violence prevention programmes
 |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* The INSPIRE model takes a **comprehensive view of VAC** and includes physical, emotional and sexual violence in that.
* The model recognises the importance of schools in supporting children to develop **life skills** to also reduce violence they are likely to experience/perpetrate in the future such as **intimate partner violence (IPV).**
* The model recognises that to address VAC in schools, including sexual violence, a **“whole of school” approach** is needed (see below for more information).
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* INSPIRE does **not set out to address violence within the education system** as such though it suggests that the approaches set out in the model is likely to lead to improved school attendance and reductions in sexual assaults and bullying (though not necessarily only in schools).
 |
| Example indicators | Example indicators from the INSPIRE framework for education and life skills:* Missed school due to safety concerns, past month and past 12 months - Percentage of adolescents who stayed away from school during the past month and past 12 months because they felt unsafe at or on the way to/from school or online, by sex and age.
* Exposure to violence prevention and response curricula in the past 12 months - Percentage of female and male children and adolescents who were taught in their classes in the past academic year how to prevent and respond to violence, by sex and grade level (or age).
 |
| Sources | WHO <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/inspire-seven-strategies-for-ending-violence-against-children>  |

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| Safe to Learn  |
| Type | Call to action and benchmarking tool  |
| Focus | VAC, child safeguarding  |
| Description | The Safe to Learn initiative is framed around a Call to Action to address school violence. It has been endorsed by 15 countries, but not the UK. The Call to Action includes: * **Implement policy and legislation** that protect children from all forms of violence in and around schools, including online violence.
* **Strengthen prevention and response at the school level** to ensure all students access safe and gender-sensitive learning environments that promote positive discipline, child-centred teaching and protect and improve children’s physical and mental wellbeing.
* **Shift social norms and behaviour change** to promote parents, teachers, children, local government and community leaders to promote positive social norms and gender equality to ensure schools are safe spaces for learning.
* **Invest resources effectively** to address violence in schools.
* **Generate and use evidence** on how to effectively end violence in schools.

The Call to Action has been translated into a Progammatic Framework & Benchmarking Tool. The tool is not intended to be a comprehensive reference. It includes benchmarks (measuring quality of efforts to prevent and respond to violence in and around schools, and key gaps). With support of DFID and the World Bank, Safe to Learn partners have further developed this tool into a diagnostic framework that assesses quality of implementation of the benchmarks through national, district and school level (forthcoming). |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* The Call to Action and related documents address **all forms of violence against children in education**.
* It links to the **INSPIRE model** (see above for more information).
* The Call to Action is heavily grounded in **social norms change**, recognising the importance of involving specific interventions to address social norms involving students, school staff, parents and community members.
* The Call to Action and relevant interventions are sufficiently high level to account for **contextualisation** within and across countries.
* The Call to Action is **relevant to both national and local Governments and civil society**.

Implementation of standards* The Call to Action aim to develop a **shared vision of work** between governments, civil society organisations, communities, teachers and children themselves to end the violence in schools.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* The call to action sets out what needs to happen at a **very high level**. While the Progammatic Framework & Benchmarking Tool delve a bit deeper into what key interventions are for each of these areas, they remain at a high level.
 |
| Example indicators (benchmarks) | * There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management.
* The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multisectoral national child protection policy framework.
* Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, child-friendly reporting and referral procedures, and safe recruitment standards.
* Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line support to children experiencing violence.
* The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind (in line with established standards for student safety regarding school buildings and grounds).
* Specific, evidence-informed interventions are implemented and evaluated with schools, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence (in line with national policy supporting the development and implementation of such).
* Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and reflect needs and gaps in the system.
 |
| Sources | Safe to Learn <https://www.end-violence.org/safe-to-learn#call-to-action> and <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/STL%20Global%20Programmatic%20Framework_.pdf>  |

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| Whole of School Approach to Address School Violence  |
| Type | Programming model  |
| Focus | School-related GBV, VAC, child safeguarding  |
| Description | The whole of school approach to address violence in schools is a comprehensive framework for addressing violence in schools, but is often most heavily associated with school related GBV (SRGBV). The model includes the following components: * Leadership: Laws, policies and educational reform
* Environment: Ensuring schools are safe and supportive
* Prevention: Curriculum, teaching and training
* Responses: In and around schools
* Partnership: Collaborating with and engaging key stakeholders
* Evidence: Monitoring and evaluation

An effective whole of school approach is one that:* Builds on existing evidence
* Develops an agreed understanding of and response to school violence
* Aligns the approach with any existing national policy frameworks
* Addresses patterns of behavior over time
* Covers all vulnerable groups
* Remains student-centred

The approach takes into account the interconnectedness of schools, communities, and families in working to improve the learning environment for students, staff, and community members.  |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* Grounded in an understanding of the **interconnectedness of schools within a wider community** including power, gender and social inequality and social norms.
* **Backed up by evidence** which suggests a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach is needed to address violence in the education sector.
* Takes a **comprehensive understanding of violence against children**.
* **Applicable to both Governments and other actors** working on education programming.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* **Primarily used within the context of addressing SRGBV**, though it is also applicable to other forms of school violence.

Implementation of standards* Due to being so comprehensive it can be **difficult to implement all aspects of the approach** within a school. Some guidance suggests that the activities can be sequenced and still produce positive outcomes.[[9]](#footnote-9)
 |
| Example indicators | * The code of conduct emphasizes conduct promoting a positive and safe school environment.
* Student leadership is centralized; girls and boys are equally represented.
* Healthy peer relationships are promoted and student awareness and attitudes about gender norms and SRGBV improve.
* Teachers have capacity to identify, respond to, and prevent SRGBV.
* School structures promote women’s leadership and support teachers who experience violence.
* Students have safe and confidential spaces to report SRGBV.
* Reporting mechanisms are linked to support systems.
* Establish referral links with local child protection systems.
 |
| Sources | UNGEI <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Whole-School-Approach-to-Prevent-SRGBV-Minimum-Standards-Framework-UNGEI.pdf> UNESCO and UN Women <http://www.ungei.org/Global_Guidance_SRGBV.pdf>  |

## Non-education specific safeguarding standards focusing on working with children

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| The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Minimum Standards and PSEAH Standards  |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child protection (safeguarding); SEAH  |
| Description | The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) have developed minimum standards for child protection (safeguarding) and SEAH. The Child Protection Policy and PSEAH Policy, which include minimum standards apply to all partners and individuals that receive DFAT funding or are contracted by DFAT to deliver services. There is a specific set of guidance for applying the child protection standards in education programmes. |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* **Both sets of standards are underpinned by principles** which include: zero tolerance of inaction; taking a risk-based approach; apply best interests or survivor centred principles, and; shared responsibility. The more recent PSEAH policy has also included principles for strong leadership and culture change; and recognising the need to address gender inequality and other power imbalances.
* **Linked to international rights** e.g. UNCRC.
* Explanation of **why the standard is set and the risks arising** if the standard is not implemented.
* **Appropriate level of detail** is included e.g. what robust recruitment means, list of professional behaviours and standards for obtaining/publishing children’s images.

Implementation of standards* Standards **apply to the range of organisations that receive DFAT funding** or support, including multi and bi-lateral donors (potential for impact across the sector).
* The Child Protection and PSEAH policies **reference tools and resources** to support partners and individuals implement or adhere to the standards.
* **Clear reporting process** for concerns about DFAT, or DFAT funded, personnel.
* **List of relevant legislation and international instruments** that guide the standards.
* PSEAH standards include **applicability of standards to organisations according to their level of risk.**
* **Guidance on child protection in education** identifies key risks and mitigation strategies.
* DFAT monitors compliance. There is guidance which include **indicators for monitoring and evaluation**.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* **Education guidance does not link to PSEAH standards** so focus is on the child in the school and not whether teachers or other personnel are safe.

Implementation of standards* **Level of detail in PSEAH standards less** than that in the Child Protection Standards e.g. organisations would need to refer to the latter to understand what robust recruitment meant.
 |
| Example indicators | Both sets of standards:* Having policy and reporting procedure in place
* The organisation undertakes a risk assessment
* Recruitment and screening, and employment practices address and manage risk

PSEAH standards only:* Prohibit transactional sex for all personnel, while engaged in the direct delivery of DFAT business.
* Prohibit fraternisation for all non-national personnel, while engaged in the direct delivery of the DFAT business.

Child protection standards only (from monitoring and evaluation guidance):* % of teachers trained in positive discipline methods, non-discrimination, gender equity and inclusion, identifying signs of abuse and how to respond and refer them
* % of children who report feeling safer in different contexts
* % of services who have adopted a child protection code of conduct
 |
| Sources | DFAT (2018; 2019; 2020) <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/preventing-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment/Pages/default><https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/pages/child-protection-policy> |

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| Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards |
| Type | Standards  |
| Focus | Child safeguarding  |
| Description | Keeping Children Safe is an independent not-for-profit organisation that sets international standards for child safeguarding. There are four core standards that cover:* Policy
* People
* Procedures
* Accountability

These core standards describe what organisations need to have in place to ensure they safeguard children in all areas of the organisations’ work. The standards reference the UNCRC.  |
| Strengths | Content of standards* Scope of standards covers **all areas of an organisation**.
* A number of **donors reference or require these standards** to be adopted by organisations receiving funding.
* **Standards can be used by organisations working in education** to implement safeguards in both their operations and education programme design and delivery.
* Organisations are required to **develop and implement a child safeguarding policy** which details how the policy will be applied across the organisation e.g. in recruitment, programming etc. The policy needs to include a confidential reporting mechanism.
* The standard on People outlines what organisations need to have in place in terms of **safeguarding expertise, codes of conduct and recruitment of staff and volunteers**. It is also clear on **engaging partners, children and communities**.
* The standard on procedures includes the need to **integrate child safeguarding in programming design and implementation**, through conducting **risk assessments**, integrating into **procurement and partner management processes**. This standard also commits organisations to setting up **reporting mechanisms**, accompanied by a **mapping of local referral and support services**.
* The standard on accountability commits organisations to **regular monitoring and review of policy and measures** as well as **learning from cases**.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* Whilst the scope of the standards covers all areas of an organisation, and the guidance on implementing the standards does describe what is needed, the standards themselves **lack a level of detail that organisations might need** to understand what to put in place.

Implementation of standards* Additional guidance would be needed on fully integrating child safeguarding measures into specific programmes and activities e.g. education.
 |
| Example indicators | * Recruitment processes have strong child safeguarding measures in place.
* There are written guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults towards children and of children towards other children.
* There are guidelines for engaging partners, communities and children on safeguarding.
* Child safeguarding risk assessments and mitigation strategies are incorporated into existing risk assessment processes at all levels.
* Child safeguarding measures are integrated with existing processes and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme cycle management, performance management, procurement, partner agreements and management systems etc.).
* A reporting and responding process for incidents and concerns is developed which is locally appropriate.
* Implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures is regularly monitored.
 |
| Sources | Keeping Children Safe (2020) <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global> |

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| UNICEF  |
| Type | Standards |
| Focus | PSEA; Child Safeguarding  |
| Description | UNICEF has articulated its commitment and the standards it expects from partners through the Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children (2016), the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2019) and the PSEA assessment tool, which partners are required to complete, which uses the IASC Minimum Standards for PSEA.  |
| Strengths  | Content of standards* The Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children requires **civil society partners to have policies and procedures in place.**
* **The PSEA standards are the IASC PSEA standards** which are commonly in use within the sector.
* **The strategy for sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment is underpinned by principles, goals and values** which include: zero tolerance; rights to dignity and respect; survivor centred approaches.
* **Self-assessments** against the PSEA standardscompleted for UNICEF can be **used by all UN organisations.**
* **The standards *could be* used** by organisations to determine whether recruitment, training, reporting and referral processes **that apply to education are fit for purpose.**

Implementation of standards* The PSEA self-assessment standards **reference tools and resources** to support partners adhere to the standards, which can be used as evidence to demonstrate compliance.
* **Level of detail is reasonable in the self-assessment** e.g. what robust recruitment means.
* PSEA standards include **risk rating for organisations to determine what UNICEF needs to do for assurance.**
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* The Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children **does not include explicit standards that are to be followed.**
* The Policy reads as **limited in scope** without reference to designing and delivering safe programmes.
* The PSEA standards **do not include standards and indicators that are relevant for** the design and delivery of **safe programmes** i.e. designing and delivering an education programme or service that is safe.
* The **PSEA standards do not include sexual harassment** – there is a disconnect between the standards and the strategy.
* The PSEA standards **do not include child safeguarding considerations** that are important for education.

Implementation of standards* Standards **do not** **apply to the range of organisations that might partner with UNICEF.**
* **Lack of clarity on the scope of application of the PSEA standards** e.g. the assessment will take place primarily at headquarters level.
* Organisations would have **difficulty ensuring their education services included all the necessary safeguarding measures** whether using the policies or standards set by UNICEF, without reference to other frameworks such as INEE.
 |
| Example indicators | PSEA standards in self-assessment tool:* Organizational policy on PSEA exists.
* Organization’s contracts and partnership agreements include a standard clause requiring contractors, suppliers, consultants and sub-partners to commit to a zero-tolerance policy on SEA.
* Organization holds mandatory trainings for all personnel on the organization’s SEA policy and procedures.
* Organization has mechanisms and procedures for personnel, beneficiaries and communities, including children, to report SEA allegations.
* Organization has a system to ensure survivors of SEA, including children, receive immediate professional assistance.
* Organization has a process for investigation of allegations of SEA.
 |
| Sources | UNICEF (2016; 2019; 2020) |

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| Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for external partners |
| Type | Standards |
| Focus | SEAH, child safeguarding  |
| Description | The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has two sets of standards in relation to safeguarding: enhanced due diligence which looks at SEAH, and specific standards on child safeguarding, which are only used for partners that will be working with children. Both of these are divided into the following sections: * Safeguarding
* Whistleblowing
* Human resources, recruitment and selection
* Risk management
* Code of conduct
* Governance and accountability

Neither of the standards have specifically been developed for the education sector but rather to assess a potential partner’s ability to prevent, mitigate and respond to SEAH and child safeguarding risks (where applicable).  |
| Strengths | Content of standards* Standards **cover all key areas** of safeguarding needed for partners, including governance and accountability and risk management.
* Specific focus on ensuring implementation of the standards are **child-friendly** and in some cases indicators also include **accessibility**.

Implementation of standards* Organisations that are implementing high risk activities are required to submit **evidence of implementation** of the standards.
* A **list of questions** is available for each standard to help determine level of implementation.
 |
| Gaps | Content of standards* Though elements of the standards can be applied to the education sector, further guidance would be needed to **contextualise** these to appropriately address all forms of violence in the education sector.
* Little reference is made to **gender equality** or **organisational culture** which are needed to address the drivers of SEAH and other forms of misconduct.

Implementation of standards* The standards are **primarily relevant for** **larger international NGOs or other larger organisations**. They feel less relevant for Governments and smaller CSOs that are implementing activities in schools.
 |
| Example indicators  | * Does the organisation have a written child safeguarding policy to which all staff and associates, including partners, are required to adhere?
* Does the organisation designate key people at different levels (including senior level) as “focal points” with defined responsibilities to champion, support and communicate on child safeguarding and for effective operation of the child safeguarding policy?
* Are there child-friendly and disability inclusive reporting mechanisms in place with clear step-by-step guidance on how to report safely and where to get help?
* Does the organisation’s procedures include a case management process, risk assessment tool, risk management guidelines and case management checklist. And are risk management strategies included in design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes?
* Does the organisation have a Code of Conduct for working with children, including at events, which all staff and associates need to adhere to on taking up employment?
 |
| Sources | HM Government – UK Aid (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-enhanced-due-diligence-safeguarding-for-external-partners>  |

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1. Key search terms included: standard, indicators, model, framework, minimum standard AND SEAH, safeguarding, child protection, gender-based violence, GBV, violence, VAWG, violence, child sexual abuse, CSA, PSEA, exploitation, abuse, violence AND education, school, higher education, TVET, online, tertiary, university, college, teacher, remote education [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Education Cannot Wait is not included in the following table due to lack of publicly available information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Globally, half of all children live in countries with no legal protection from corporal punishment, and more than 80% of students in some countries experience physical abuse under the guise of punishment (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016). Although most standards refer to positive discipline and classroom management, there are variations in the extent to which the standards refer to corporal punishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example, several ‘very serious’ SEAH incidents occurred during the first week of online teaching in Singapore’s lockdown with obscene images and verbal abuse being streamed during lessons. In 2020, there have also been growing reports that video footage of SEAH during ‘zoom-bombing’ are circulated via online platforms such as YouTube and Tiktok, leading to further psychological distress and harassment (Fraser, 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The [Age Appropriate Design Code](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-data-protection-themes/age-appropriate-design-a-code-of-practice-for-online-services-2-1.pdf) came into force in September 2020 and offers children specific protection online through 15 standards to provide ‘built-in protection’ for children on digital platforms applications and websites (Oak Foundation, 2020). The code of practice could service as new ‘best practice’ for stakeholders seeking to influence technology policy and practice regarding children’s safety and rights online. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Offering potential to strengthen their respective approaches and deliver better results: INSPIRE strategies can be used to complement the CPMS (e.g. by providing examples of interventions which have proven effective and which can be replicated and contextualized to humanitarian settings), while the CPMS can complement INSPIRE strategies by providing standards of quality for interventions. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. An inter-governmental political commitment to protect students, teachers, schools, and universities from the worst effects of armed conflict. It is dedicated to the protection of education from attack and restrict the use of schools and universities for military purposes in armed conflict. More information can be found at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/utvikling/safe_schools_declaration.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See for example Kangas, A., Fancy, K. and Müller, C. with K. Bishop (2019) *DFID guidance note on safer schools: Addressing school violence through education programming*, London: VAWG Helpdesk. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)