



# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## Guiding Statements For Policy

To provide a safe, welcoming and affirming environment reflecting the school's child protection and safeguarding guidelines, to develop students socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

To develop strong partnerships with all stakeholders to ensure the safety, well-being and holistic development of all students, including those in Boarding and Homestay arrangements.

To provide a safe and secure learning and working environment that meets the needs of all students and staff, and is conducive to high quality learning.

## Rights of the Child

ACS (International)'s values statement in relation to its students and alignment with the United Nation's Rights of the Child is stated in the Inclusion Policy.

## Key Definitions

### *Staff*

The definition of *Staff* at ACS (International) is any adult who connected to the school through performing work, including employees, volunteers, contractors, third party vendors and other similar roles.

### *Child*

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child define a child as being any human who is below the age of 18. While this definition covers the majority of students at the school, the school does have some students that are 18 or over, therefore the definition of a Child at ACS (International) also extends to any enrolled students who are 18 or over.

### *Child Protection and Safeguarding*

Child Protection is defined as being the measures taken to prevent and respond to child abuse. Safeguarding refers to the protective practices in place in order to minimise the likelihood of child abuse.

ACS (International) commits to ensuring that Child Protection and Safeguarding practices are outworked by all stakeholders of the school. This involves collective and individual responsibility and preventative actions required to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to risk of or actual harm.

| <i>Prepared By</i> | <i>Approved By</i> | <i>Review and Revised</i> | <i>Reviewed by</i> | <i>Next Review</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
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### *Child Abuse*

Commission or omission that would endanger or impair the child's physical or emotional well-being or that are judged inappropriate. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

This definition also recognises and includes peer-to-peer abuse, that is inappropriate behaviour of children towards other children.

Please refer to the ACS (International) *Types of Abuse* document for a more detailed explanation on physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and commercial exploitation.

### **Principles of Child Protection and Safeguarding**

ACS (International) fundamentally believes that all children have the right to a life that is free from harm and abuse. ACS (International) has policies, practices and procedures in place to provide an environment that is free from abuse. The principles that are used to guide these are as follows:

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- ACS (International) has a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

### **Commitment**

ACS (International) commits to the following in the areas of Policy, People, Procedures and Accountability. The section below outlines ACS (International)'s commitment in these areas and the policies in which the commitment is outworked.

#### *Policy*

- The school has a values statement about the rights of the child that is aligned with the responsibilities set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- The school has developed and adopted an appropriate definition of child abuse including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and commercial exploitation and inappropriate behaviour of children towards other children.
- The school has a policy, approved by the School Board that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately if children are harmed, or if allegations of harm to children are made.

- 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.
- School safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are subject to an annual, scheduled review and revision.
- The school has recruitment policies and executes 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.

### *People*

- The school has clearly defined leadership responsibilities for child safety and duty of care.
- The has formal procedures for determining the character of adults who interact with students. These procedures may include criminal record, background checks or other such means as may be suitable based upon the risk posed to the students.
- Formal procedures to obtain and verify references for prospective and existing faculty and staff.
- 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. All faculty, staff, volunteers and contractors acknowledge that they have read the code of conduct and agree to abide by it.
- The school has a scheduled programme of regular, systematic professional training for volunteers, contractors, faculty and staff on student safeguarding, child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention and reporting.

### *Procedures*

- The school shall review the this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy annually. The policy shall also be reviewed as necessary, if change is required due to recommendations from the International Task Force for the Protection of Children or similar bodies, or through internal suggestions.
- The school will follow the International Centre For Missing & Exploited Children's protocol: Managing Allegations of Abuse by Educators and Other Adults: Protocol for International Schools, for any allegations regarding adults in the ACS (International) Community.
- Where the school becomes aware of sexual exploitation it will report it to ICMEC's CyberTipline at [report.cybertip.org](http://report.cybertip.org).

- The school shall have in place formal learning programmes throughout the school experience related to child protection which cover areas such as bullying, personal safety, physical abuse, manipulation, grooming, online safety, healthy sexual behaviour, neglect and negligent behaviour, self-harm, staying safe away from home, commercial exploitation and disclosing abuse. These programmes to be delivered by members of faculty or external providers who are trained in these areas.
- The school has developed structured procedures for reporting suspected or disclosed maltreatment or abuse, including disclosure of abuse that may have taken place in the past history of the school, and adopts a formal policy identifying actions to be taken, including informing appropriate authorities.
- The school develops meaningful and effective relationships with external organisations, schools and bodies that are able to provide appropriate support and advice on matters related to child protection.
- 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.)
- Due regard is given to building and facility design, layout, designation and use to ensure best practice in child safety and protection, within the context of the host country.

#### *Accountability*

- The school is cognizant of cultural expectations and complies with the legal and ethical expectations and requirements regarding child abuse within the country in which it operates.
- All reports of suspected or disclosed abuse and any actions taken by the school are securely archived, regardless of the conclusions reached.

#### **Child Protection Support and Advice**

ACS (International) shall engage with external organisations and bodies in order to inform its practices in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding. This will include:

- International Task Force on Children Protection literature
- Council of International Schools, including workshops
- Child Protection Service, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore
- Ministry of Education, Singapore
- Collaboration with other international schools
- Other international or local agencies as necessary.

#### **Legal and Ethical Expectations**

ACS (International) commits to their obligations under Singapore law in regards to Child Protection and Safeguarding. Further to this ACS (International) commits to going beyond

the requirements of the law by employing best practices as recommended by international bodies, including the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) and other similar bodies. The safety and protection of the child shall be the priority in all cases.

### **Implementation of Child Protection Practices Throughout the School**

ACS (International) commits to employing best practices in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding throughout all areas of the school. This includes providing the budget necessary to meet our duty of care obligations. Evidence of this practice should be visible in strategic planning, budgeting, property maintenance and development, recruitment, programme management, performance management, procurement, partner agreements, risk management and management systems.

### **Gender Specific Areas**

Areas around the school may be marked as gender specific areas, most commonly toilet and change room facilities. These areas should only be entered into by people of that gender. However, if there is a requirement for someone of the opposite gender to enter they should do so by clearly marking the area as closed and with clear notification of opposite gender working in that area. They should not do this in isolation but should do so with the knowledge and approval of the school.

### **References**

- CIS Membership Standards.
- International Task Force on Child Protection, School Evaluation Committee, Final Report and Recommendations.
- International Centre For Missing & Exploited Children's protocol: Managing Allegations of Abuse by Educators and Other Adults: Protocol for International Schools
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNICEF (n.d.). Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved 18 February 2016
- Child Safeguarding, Save the Children
- Child Protection in Singapore – Ministry for Social and Family Development