



Child Protection and Safeguarding Accommodation Policy

Guiding Statements For Policy

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.

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) will support families and students who have concerns about child protection and safeguarding issues while in Singapore. However, it is important that ACS (International) families and students understand that the safeguarding of students while in their accommodation is the responsibility of the family appointed Guardian, Homestay Provider and Boarding Hall.

The section below is provided to families to help them understand the principles of Child Protection and Safeguarding that should be expected from accommodation providers.

What is 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.

Accommodation Providers

Accommodation providers should fundamentally believe that all children have the right to a life that is free from harm and abuse. They should have 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:

Guiding Principles

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- Accommodation Providers have a duty of care to children in their care.

<i>Prepared By</i>	<i>Approved By</i>	<i>Review and Revised</i>	<i>Reviewed by</i>	<i>Next Review</i>
CPC	SLT		CPC	T2 2021

- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.
- The Accommodation Provider is clear in that it describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately if children are harmed, or if allegations of harm to children are made.

Homestay

Homestay parents are required to exercise a duty of care towards international students. It is therefore necessary for homestay families to be aware of the following when they host international students:

- Homestay Providers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- A knowledge and understanding of the needs of adolescents
- An understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences
- An understanding of the needs of young people away from their home environment
- A flexible approach to matters of discipline, house rules and cooperative living
- What to do if a problem occurs.
- 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.

Boarding Halls

Boarding Halls tend to offer a higher level of care and support to students when compared to Homestay. For this reason ACS (International) requires students who are new to Singapore to reside within the Boarding Hall for the first year of their study at ACS (International), unless they are able to live with an immediate family member. Once a student has completed one year in the Boarding Hall, they may seek a different Accommodation Provider, however in most cases the school recommends that they remain in the Boarding Halls due to the higher level of care and support students are offered.

The Boarding Hall should have:

- Specific child protection policies, practices and training to ensure the safety and welfare of all students.
- Formal procedures to obtain and verify references for prospective and existing staff.
- 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.

- A scheduled programme of regular, systematic professional training for volunteers, contractors, faculty and staff on student safeguarding, child abuse prevention, recognition, intervention and reporting.
- 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 Boarding Hall, and adopts a formal policy identifying actions to be taken, including informing appropriate authorities.
- Develop 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.
- Be 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 Boarding Hall are securely archived, regardless of the conclusions reached.
- Areas around the Boarding Hall 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 Boarding Hall.

Child Protection Support and Advice

For further information about Child Protection and Safeguarding families can use the following resources:

- International Task Force on Children Protection
- Child Protection Service, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore
- Ministry of Education, Singapore