



Child Protection Policy

Version 1.0

Publish Date: 11th August 2020

Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Objectives of this Policy	3
Statement of Commitment	3
Responsibility Towards Local and International Laws and Agencies	4
Specific Responsibility as an Educational Institution	4
Responsibility to Accreditation Agencies	4
Definition	4
Behavioural Protocols	5
Child Protection Team (CPT)	5
Reporting	6
Recruitment	7
Staff Training and Review	7
Individuals Working with Students	7
Students	7
Parents and Guardians	7
Child Safety and Digital Citizenship	8
Digital Citizenship Instruction	8
Appendix I: Common Myths	8
APPENDIX II - Key Elements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	9
APPENDIX III - Child Protection Laws of Bangladesh	10
APPENDIX IV - Abuse: Definitions and Indicators	10
Physical Abuse	10
Emotional Abuse	11
Sexual Abuse	11
Neglect	12
References	13
Acknowledgment	14

Purpose

This policy shall provide the specific protocols/rules/regulations to safeguard the members of the Smart Innovations School (SIS) community.

Objectives of this Policy

The policy shall contain the following objectives:

- We are committing to assist and provide protection against any kind of child abuse which will be evident through a safeguarding culture embedded in day to day practice.
- To provide protocols/rules/regulations to ensure that our community has the knowledge and understanding relating to abuse and/or neglect and risks thereof.
- To provide pertinent information relating to child abuse/neglect and tools to assist in identifying and recognizing cases of suspected or known cases of child abuse and/or neglect.
- To outline clearly protocols for reporting suspected or known cases of child abuse and/or neglect.
- To establish procedures so that prompt and adequate assistance is provided to a child in need of special care and protection due to suspected or known cases of child abuse and/or neglect.
- To ensure a high standard of child protection within the Smart Innovations School community.
- To state our background check protocol.

Statement of Commitment

Smart Innovations School is committed to the safety and well-being of our students. SIS expects its staff and prospective staff/volunteers to uphold the responsibility of safeguarding students and report concerns through the established protocol. SIS will routinely engage in risk management analysis on aspects of operations.

Every member/staff must read this Child Protection Policy. The signature of the staff/members on the last page of the policy (Acknowledgement) shall indicate that they have read the document, are cognisant of the contents, and will follow the stipulated provisions. Staff/members will be asked to read and sign the acknowledgment page at the start of their employment with the school. However, if there are any questions raised by the members/staff regarding this policy and the protocols, such questions for the purpose of clarification shall be directed to the concerned committee on this matter.

Responsibility Towards Local and International Laws and Agencies

SIS Child Protection Policy draws on various international laws and local laws in our host country, Bangladesh. These include The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989; as ratified by Bangladesh in 1990), The Children Act (1974), and National Child Policy (1994). Key elements of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for the purpose of this policy are included in Appendix I.

Specific Responsibility as an Educational Institution

School communities have unique characteristics, of which school personnel must be aware in terms of the individuals who are around our children. School personnel should be understanding and knowledgeable of the potential reasons why children may not be able to talk about any victimization they might have experienced.

Responsibility to Accreditation Agencies

SIS is seeking accreditation by the Council of International Schools (CIS), International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), Fieldwork Education, and license by the Ministry of Education Bangladesh. CIS is a signatory to The New Standards for Child Protection Adopted by School Evaluation Agencies in February 2016. As such, this Child Protection Policy draws on those standards.

Definition

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19, provides that children should be protected from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child. The State should establish appropriate programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Child Abuse - According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting 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.” A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

Often, children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem. Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects, or trusts.

Behavioural Protocols

It is expected that all employees and volunteers will build positive relationships with students to support learning while adhering to standards of professional and ethical practice. SIS Ethical Standards for Teachers document states, “To act at all times in a manner that brings no dishonour to the individual, to the school or to the teaching profession.”

Examples of expected conduct:

- SIS community members endeavour to treat all members “equal in dignity and rights.” (Article 1, Declaration of Human Rights). Mindful of discrimination based on “indigenous people, migrants, minorities, people with disabilities, discrimination against women, racial and religious discrimination, or discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity” (ratification by General Assembly resolution 2016).
- Maintain high expectations for all students that are reasonable, clear, and age-appropriate.
- Use positive behaviour intervention strategies and supports to guide student behaviour and appropriate response strategies to maintain a safe and secure environment.
- Respect student’s personal space and maintain appropriate touch and appropriate boundaries.
- Engage in appropriate verbal interactions with students (no profanity, discussing intimate details of personal life, sexual or offensive humour, shaming, belittling, or derogatory remarks about a student, harsh language that threatens or humiliate children).
- Maintain positive and appropriate school-based communication avenues with students (communicate through a school email account, avoid social media communication such as Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp).
- Immediately report suspected or known cases of child abuse and/or neglect per the protocol outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection Team (CPT)

The SIS Child Protection Team (CPT) shall contain the following four members-

1. Head of the School.
2. School Nurse.
3. One International Teacher.
4. One Teaching Assistant (host country representative).

These four persons will work as a team, in pairs, with teachers and individually in order to keep the SIS Child Protection Policy at the forefront of our practice.

Among other tasks, the team will be accountable for the following:

- Liaison with teachers and/or set the schedule for student lessons and other child protection tasks for the school year (possible themes: safe touch, health, digital citizenship, anti-bullying, etc.).
- Set the schedule for lessons and other child protection tasks for the school year.
- Keep up to date on research and best practices relating to local social/medical/legal services.
- Address teacher reluctance to report.
- Provide emergency/after-hours contact points and facilitates reporting.

SIS expects its staff to uphold the responsibility of safeguarding students and report concerns through the established protocol.

Reporting

It is the ethical duty of all persons who have concerns that a child is being or is likely to be abused and/or neglected to report to a member of the CPT who will inform the Head of School, assess the report and, if appropriate, conduct an investigation. Concerns simply mean that, based on what was seen or information received, a person believes a child has been or is likely to be at risk. The reporter need not be certain. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to determine whether the case of abuse and/or neglect must be investigated. The designated CPT member will be responsible for maintaining the documentation of actions taken.

Allegations against (i) individuals working with students, (ii) students and (iii) parents and guardians within the SIS community:

If the abuse occurs in a school setting, it is the ethical responsibility of the adult to report the concern to a member of the CPT immediately. Where there are allegations of child abuse by a school staff member, the Head of School should investigate. Where there are allegations of abuse or misconduct by a school volunteer, SIS has the authority to issue a “No Entry” prohibiting attendance at school by the volunteer except under special permission from the Head of School. Where there are allegations of child abuse by a contract worker or other person at school, SIS has the authority to issue a “No Entry” prohibiting the contractor from attending the school as a contract worker or any other capacity thereof.

School personnel who have reason to believe that another employee, volunteer, contract service provider, or another person on school property has abused a student, he/she must report the incident

or information to the Head of School immediately. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to investigate the allegations and determine what action is required.

Recruitment

SIS requires all members of staff to affirm that they do not have a criminal background. In addition, for faculty members applying through International Schools Services and other recruitment agencies, teachers must declare if they have been convicted of a serious criminal offense (felony) in any country. These agencies ask prospective employees to list all previous positions, addresses in the last ten years, as well as to account for any time when not employed. New faculty members hired for the new school year will need to complete background checks prior to the contract being issued.

The vetting process - which includes, but is not limited to, reference checks as well as a declaration of no criminal background - applies to any person who is engaged by SIS including, but not limited to the following, contract employees (gardeners, cleaners, maintenance staff), volunteers.

Staff Training and Review

SIS is in the process of implementing a program of regular, systematic professional training for-

1. individuals working with students.
2. students; and
3. parents and guardians to provide safeguards to members of our SIS community.

Individuals Working with Students

- Abuse - awareness of types, signs/symptoms, prevention, policies and laws, reporting process, children's curricula, local authority, and resources.

Students

- Age-appropriate personal safety/abuse prevention training for all grade levels based on core elements and evidence-based practices.

Parents and Guardians

- School safety goals and objectives. How to talk with their children. Local authority and resources available: parent films, take-home letters, and home exercises; Collaboration/partnership with school and community resources.

Child Safety and Digital Citizenship

SIS has policies, regulations, and uses its resources to highlight internet safety. SIS has a Digital Citizenship Agreement (DCA) for students, as well as faculty and staff.

Digital Citizenship Instruction

Kindergarten-Grade 5: Continuum of lessons taught by ES ICT integration specialists and homeroom teachers. Other specialist teachers may implement elements of Digital Citizenship into their lessons when it is relevant.

Appendix I: Common Myths

Myth: *Child abuse is carried out by strangers.*

Fact: Research indicates that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and is committed by individuals known to the child. International school communities tend to have families that move often and are separated from their extended families in their home-of-record. When abuse is within the family, the transient life-style then increases the risk to international school students who tend not to have access to outside resources, and therefore cannot get help.

Myth: *Learning about child protection is harmful to your children.*

Fact: Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to react to dangerous situations. Teaching using a specific population context increases protective behaviour.

Myth: *Abuse education is sex education.*

Fact: Research-based programs prepare students to develop the skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from perpetrators, and behaviors that include bullying, harassment, and other forms of exploitation.

Myth: *Abuse is a matter of culture; physical or sexual abuse falls within the norms of some cultures and is acceptable.*

Fact: The reality is that there no excuse for child abuse! No culture supports harming children.

Myth: *Child abuse is a result of poverty and happens in low socioeconomic circumstances.*

Fact: Research indicates that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural sectors of society. A common characteristic of an abusive family is isolation, such as that

commonly found in international school families who move often or are separated from their extended families at home.

Myth: *International Schools do not have to report abuse to local authorities.*

Fact: International schools are bound by the laws of the host country and as such international schools must be knowledgeable and compliant with the child protection laws in their locale. Furthermore, international schools are legally and ethically liable for any violation of existing laws related to reporting of cases of abuse or neglect.

APPENDIX II - Key Elements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- “... a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years ...” (Article 1)
- “... take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment ...” (Article 2)
- “... In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration ... undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures ... shall ensure that the institutions, services, and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.” (Article 3)
- “... shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child ... Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide the necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement...” (Article 19).
- “... recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education,

or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development..." (Article 32).

- "... undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse ..." (Article 34)

APPENDIX III - Child Protection Laws of Bangladesh

Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
February 2011: National Children Policy 2011

<http://ecd-bangladesh.net/document/documents/National-Children-Policy-2011-English-04.12.2012.pdf>

The Children Act, 2013.

APPENDIX IV - Abuse: Definitions and Indicators

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation).

Signs of physical abuse:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts;
- Improbable excuses are given to explain injuries;
- Injuries which have not received medical attention;
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.;
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains;
- Refusal to discuss injuries;
- Withdrawal from physical contact;
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather;
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted;
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults;
- Self-destructive tendencies;
- Being aggressive towards others;
- Being very passive and compliant;

- Chronic running away;

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse:

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed;
- Highly anxious;
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder;
- Fear of new situations;
- Low self-esteem;
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;
- Extremes of passivity or aggression;
- Drug or alcohol abuse;
- Chronic running away;
- Compulsive stealing;
- Obsessions or phobias;
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration;
- Attention-seeking behaviour;
- Persistent tiredness;
- Lying.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Pain or irritation to the genital area;

- Vaginal or penile discharge;
- Difficulty with urination;
- Infection, bleeding;
- STDs;
- Fear of people or places;
- Aggression;
- Regressive behaviours, bedwetting or stranger anxiety;
- Excessive masturbation;
- Sexually provocative;
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting;
- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive;
- Suffering from what seem physical ailments that can't be explained medically;
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult;
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person;
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities;
- Age inappropriate sexualized behaviour or language;

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Some indicators of neglect:

- Medical needs unattended;
- Lack of supervision;
- Consistent hunger;
- Inappropriate dress;
- Inadequate nutrition;
- Fatigue or listlessness;
- Self-destructive;
- Extreme loneliness;
- Extreme need for affection;
- Failure to grow;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school;
- Low self-esteem;
- Poor social relationships;
- Compulsive stealing;

- Drug or alcohol abuse;

References

1. Association of International Schools in Africa Child Protections Handbook (3rd Edition) 2016 Convention on the Rights of the Child
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
2. UN Declaration of Human Rights
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
3. International School of Kuala Lumpur, Protecting Our Children: Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for the International School of Kuala Lumpur
4. International School of Beijing, Child Protection Community Information, International Task Focus on Child Protection Report: Child Protection Initiatives (June 2016)
5. International Task Focus on Child Protection Report: Outcomes and Recommendations (June 2016)
6. United Nations Human Rights; 'Convention on the Rights of the Child'
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
7. World Health Organization: Child maltreatment
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs150/e/>
8. Laws of Bangladesh. National Children Policy 2011
<http://ecd-bangladesh.net/document/documents/National-Children-Policy-2011-English-04.12.2012.pdf>

Acknowledgment

I, _____, have read the SIS Child Protection Policy.

(please print your full name)

I am fully cognisant of the contents.

I will - if I have reason to suspect or know of a case of child abuse and/or neglect - follow the stipulated protocol.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ (DD – MM – YYYY)

[This page of the document is to be printed off, signed, and submitted to the Head of School's PA by For SIS staff who join after the school year has commenced, this page of the document is to be printed off, signed, and submitted to the Head of School's PA prior to the first day of work.]