

## Child Protection Policy



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# Section 1: Introduction of Policy

## Child Protection Policy Statement

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The International School Yangon (ISY) endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), of which our host country, Myanmar, is a signatory.

ISY has a duty of care to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young people. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection, and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff employed at ISY must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering, abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to the ISY Child Protection Policy. Further, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate, or to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country. This policy aims to ensure that students at our school learn in a safe and nurturing environment which promotes and enhances their emotional, physical and social well-being.

Underpinning ISY's commitment to child protection are our school beliefs which guide our practices and code of conduct and treatment of all people, deeming some actions as unacceptable behavior within the confines of our school. As part of our commitment, ISY will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide training for all staff, will make every effort to implement hiring practices to insure the safety of children and will review the policy annually for compliance and effectiveness.

In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, ISY will ensure a full investigation is carried out following a carefully designed course of due process. Maintaining the safety of the child will be the highest priority.

It is the expectation of the ISY Board and the Director that every member of our school community, whatever their role or level of responsibility, upholds this policy and takes responsibility for the protection of children.

Gregory Hedger, Ed.D.  
ISY School Director

## Dictionary of Terms

ISY School Board:	A voluntary group of individuals elected for 12 months as representatives of the School parent body to oversee the management and related policies of the School.
Sex Offender Registry:	Sex Offender Registries provide details of sexual offences committed by citizens of a particular jurisdiction. It is designed to keep track of people with a criminal history for sexual offences in order to minimize risk to the public.
Staff:	Refers to all staff at every level of the organization whether they be permanent full time or part-time contractually employed by ISY.
Students:	Children and young people of all ages enrolled at ISY.
Personnel:	Used interchangeably with the term 'Staff' but additionally includes volunteers acting in formal roles for the School.

## Guiding Principles

ISY has adopted and applied the four fundamental principles of the UNCRC Child Rights statement in the creation of this policy:

1. Children should neither benefit nor suffer because of their race, color, gender {gender identity, transgender, gender expression, gender nonconforming}, language, religion, national, social or ethnic origin, or because of any political or other opinion; because of their caste, property or birth status; or because they are disabled.
2. Policies, procedures and actions affecting children should put their best interests first and benefit them in the best possible way.
3. The leadership of ISY must protect children and help ensure their development – physically, emotionally, morally and socially.
4. Children have the right to have their say in decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

## Articles of the UNCRC

There are two key articles in the UNCRC on which this policy is based:

- 1) **Article 19** – Protection from abuse and neglect – The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.
- 2) **Article 34** – The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

## Scope of Application

The protection of children is a collective community responsibility. This policy will be read, understood and adhered to by all adults engaged at ISY including but not limited to the following roles:

- The Board of Management
- The Director
- The School Principals

- School Counselors
- Administrative staff
- All local and international teaching staff (including teaching assistants)
- Coaches/Activity Leaders
- Parents
- Volunteers
- Food Service Workers (both internal or external)
- Security Staff
- School Drivers
- Facilities Staff (including custodians, gardeners, and maintenance)

### **Accessibility of Policy**

This policy should be translated into Burmese so that it is easily accessible and understood by all staff working at ISY and all parents of students. ISY management must ensure that any staff with low literacy skills are provided with support in reading this document.

This policy must be accessible to all ISY staff in hard copy. The policy must be accessible to the parents of students via the ISY website and in the appropriate handbooks for students and parents.

### **Training Obligations**

All ISY employees, vendors, volunteers, tutors and any other person who have unsupervised contact with students must attend a child protection policy training preferably before contact with students but at most within **one** month of starting at ISY.

All faculty will be provided with updated training twice annually. Staff will be provided annual training.

## Definitions of Abuse

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the need of the more powerful person, typically either a member of the family a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definition that is based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

ISY defines child abuse (but does not limit the definition of abuse) as the following:

### Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend is unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including but not limited to:

#### Contact forms of sexual abuse such as:

- Fondling a child's genitals or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator
- Rubbing the perpetrator's genitals against the child's body
- Masturbation
- Oral sex
- Vaginal and anal penetration

#### Noncontact forms of sexual abuse such as:

- Making sexual comments (verbal, letter, telephone, email, text)
- Voyeurism
- Exposure to pornography
- Perpetrator exposing parts of their body or the child's body
- Inappropriate (sexual poses or nudity) photography of children

#### Possible Indicators:

- Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms

- Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint
- Not wanting to be alone with an individual
- Extremely protective parenting

## **Neglect and Negligent Treatment**

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, emotional, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

### **Possible Indicators:**

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent from Yangon for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child.

This may involve name calling, put-downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development. It also involves repeated exposure to family violence and being forced to participate in the disagreement as a tool for spying or psychological pressure.

### **Possible Indicators:**

- 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 behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

## **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child.

### **Possible Indicators:**

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures

## **Child Exploitation**

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or emotional, moral or social-emotional development.

## **Student Use of Technology**

At times students may use technology in inappropriate ways such as viewing or playing excessively violent or sexualized videos games, viewing pornography or accessing or viewing other harmful content or may engage in cyberbullying. These activities can be detrimental to a child's mental health, educational or social-emotional development.

## **Grooming**

Grooming is defined as the predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. It occurs when an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a student or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. For example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or caregiver for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

### **Early Warning Signs for in Potential Offenders:**

- Has "favorite" student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with child(ren)
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children

## **Peer to Peer or Sibling Abuse**

Peer to peer or sibling abuse occurs when a child or young person uses their power to engage a child in unwanted sexual contact or activity causing physical and emotional harm. It may be garnered by one or all of the following factors:

- Superior age
- Developmental stage
- Intellectual status
- Physical strength or position of strength

Peer to peer or sibling abuse may involve (but is not limited to) the following:

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Socializes with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships
- Sexual harassment
- Sexting
- Unwanted kissing and sexual touching
- Sexual pressure and coercion
- Sexual assault including rape

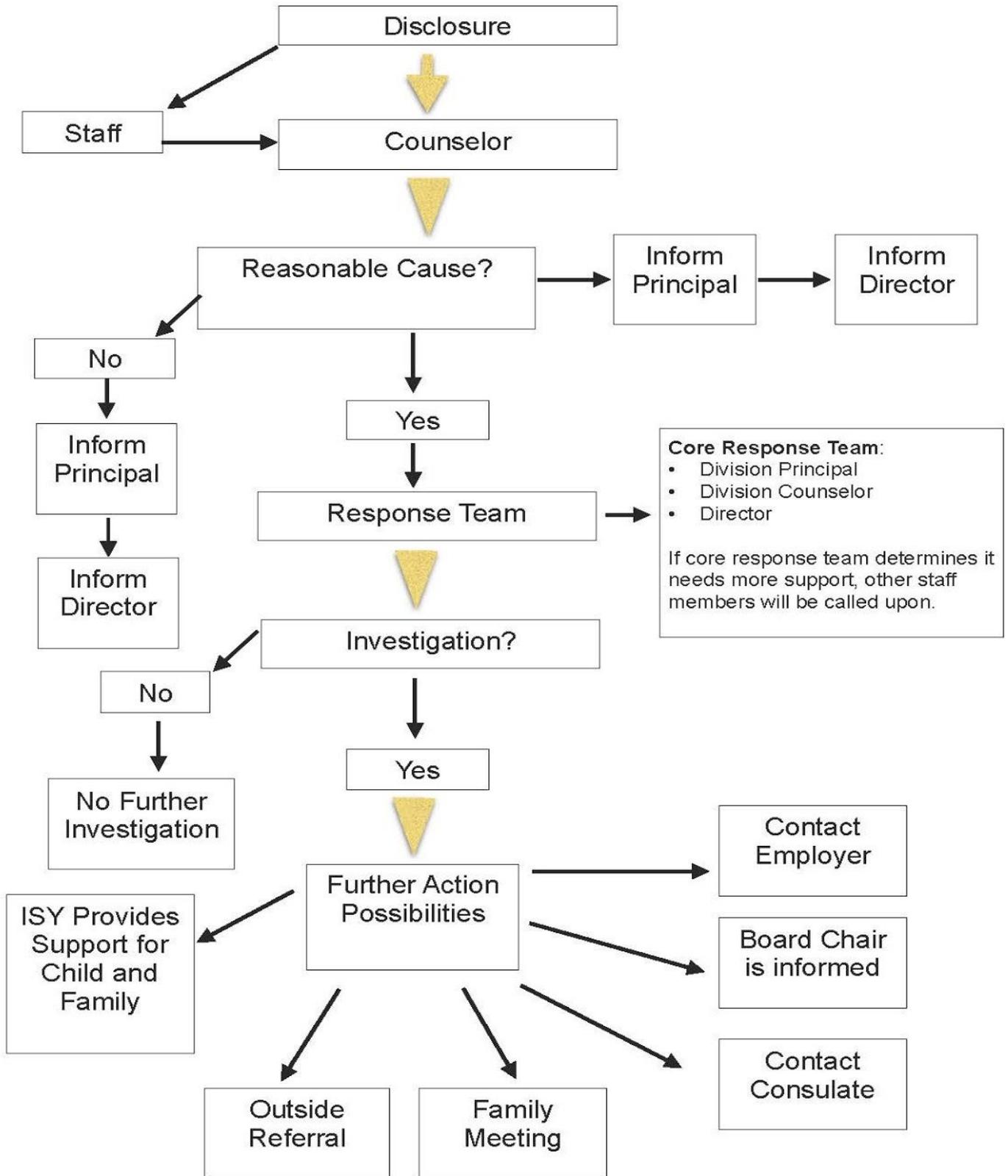
## Section 2: Reports and Allegations Guidelines

### **What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?**

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report his or her suspicions to the counselor or immediate supervisor using the *Report of Concern* (See *Appendix*). In all cases, the principal and director will be notified.

All staff are mandated to report incidences or of abuse and neglect. All ISY employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours (using the *Report of Concern*) for immediate response.

## Steps Followed After Disclosure



## Step 1

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the staff member will report the incident using the *Report of Concern* and seek advice from the division counselor or immediate supervisor within 48 hours. If the supervisor is the person contacted, the supervisor will ensure the reporter tells the counselor. The counselor will work with the division principal to develop a plan to take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report. For all reports, the director will also be informed. In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. The following procedure will be used:

- 1) Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case;
- 2) Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school;
- 3) Report the status of the case to the division principal;
- 4) Determine the course of follow-up actions.

## Step 2

Based on the acquired information, a *Plan of Action* will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that **may** take place are:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information - Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- Consultation with the Assistant Principal of Health and Safety.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor or administration.
- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns.
- Referral of the students and family to external professional counseling.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concerns with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.

## Step 3

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
- The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, such as those involving:

- Student relationships with peers
- Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
- Student-parent relationships
- Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- Mental health issues such as depression, major anxiety, dissociation, suicide ideation

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

- Severe and ongoing physical abuse, neglect and emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

In extreme cases, when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- The consulate
- The employer
- The home-of-record welfare office

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves someone from outside the family, the same procedures will be followed, with the focus of the school's efforts to protect the child and work with the family.

## **Procedure for Transferring/Transfer Students**

It is not uncommon for a child victim of abuse and/or neglect to transfer to a new school during the school year as a means of hiding and/or perpetuating the abuse. As such, when a student transfers during the school year to ISY, the School will speak directly with the prior school to ascertain the circumstance(s) for the transfer. Likewise, should an ISY student transfer during the school year as a result of an abuse/neglect allegation or investigation, the School will proactively notify the student's new school as to the circumstances and allegations. Care will be taken to balance the need to protect student confidentiality and providing the new school with information to safeguard against potential abuse/neglect.

The counselling department will be responsible for initiating the contact. This procedure is only applicable for students transferring into ISY outside of natural transfer periods (ie. semester breaks).

## **Staff Allegations**

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of ISY, the actions taken are outlined in the Managing Allegations Procedures document that can be found in Appendix 4.

## **Communication of Inappropriate Conduct by Staff**

At the sole discretion of the Director, inappropriate conduct will be communicated to past employers. Reportable conduct is defined as:

- any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), or
- any physical assault or ill-treatment of a child, or
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

## **Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse**

Children or young people may disclose abuse to you. The welfare of the child is paramount. The child's best interests should guide your response. How a disclosure is handled can affect the child's self-concept, sense of shame and blame and long term prospects for recovery from the incident of abuse.

The abuse may have been perpetrated by another staff member or volunteer, an adult in the student's immediate or extended family, an unrelated adult or another child or young person or a sibling. In some rare cases, abuse may be perpetrated by a stranger. Regardless of the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child, the guidelines for handling the disclosure in a sensitive manner are the same. They are as follows:

- Do not agree to keep their disclosure a secret. If you agree to keep a secret and then make a report, the child will view you as breaking your trust with them.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Your role is to listen, letting the child explain what happened in their own words. Do not pressure the child for a great amount of detail.
- In age appropriate language, praise the child for being courageous enough to tell you about this incident. Assure them that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously, that you believe the child and that what happened is not their fault and they are not in trouble.
- Explain that you may need to write down information so that you can remember it later. Take notes recording the child's words, descriptions, phrases and terms.
- Take note of the time, date, place and any physical marks on the child resulting from the abuse. Sign and date the notes.

- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to express disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better or promises that you can't keep.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator of abuse.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report immediately to counselor or administration. Do not take the child to your home. (See appendices for contact details).
- Respect the child's confidence. Treat the disclosure as a confidential matter.
- Explain to the child what will happen next and that you must tell someone else to get help; they will need to talk with other people about the incident so that help can be sought.

## **Privacy**

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all parties concerned. All documentation must be kept in a secure environment.
- When the director feels it is appropriate, the board of management of the school will be informed of the incident however privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.
- When appropriate, the response team may consult with external agencies. Privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.

## **Historical Abuse**

It is not uncommon for people to report acts of abuse 20 to 25 years after the event. ISY is aware that community members or other people involved with ISY in the past may have a historical grievance, complaint or allegation of abuse.

If a person presents with a historical grievance, complaint or allegation, ISY will listen to the complainant with respect. ISY will employ the procedures as outlined for a current incident, allegation, grievance or complaint. For example, follow the above guidelines for dealing sensitively with incidents of abuse from children in a respectful age-appropriate manner. The adult needs to be understood, believed and respected. The disclosure, grievance, complaint or allegation needs

to be recorded and the person consulted regarding what steps they would like to see the school take. The principles of confidentiality apply.

(See Appendix 1 for the form for recording Reports and Allegations of Abuse – *Report of Concern*)

## Section 3: Selection, Screening & Induction

### Selection, Screening and Induction of Staff and Volunteers

ISY's selection, screening and induction process for staff and volunteers has been developed to ensure that all staff members, volunteers (including board members) are adequately screened prior to their appointment to ensure their suitability to work safely with children and young people. The selection, screening and induction process involves the following steps:

1. Advertising positions
2. Position descriptions
3. Interviews
4. Identity Check
5. Qualifications check
6. Criminal history record checks
7. Sex offender registry
8. Reference checks
9. Upon appointment – Sign the code of conduct

### Advertising Positions

All staff and volunteer position descriptions must clearly outline ISY's commitment to child protection. This is to express the importance of child protection and to deter would-be perpetrators from targeting our school.

When a position is advertised, one of the following statements must be included in the job advertisement:

- ISY is committed to the protection of all children and young people from harm
- ISY has a zero tolerance policy towards child abuse and neglect
- ISY has a strict child protection policy, against which, all applicants will be assessed
- ISY requires that all applicants undergo stringent selection and screening processes before being allowed to work with children

### Position Descriptions

All positions, whether they are full-time roles, part-time roles, contract roles, or volunteer roles have a position description outlining key responsibilities and duties. Employees and volunteers will have a clear understanding of:

- Their responsibility to protect children and young people
- The parameters and boundaries and responsibilities associated with their role
- Their responsibility to report child abuse, suspected child abuse or any allegation of child abuse

The following statements must be included in all position descriptions or contracts:

- Safeguarding children from harm is a key responsibility of this role. It is your responsibility to provide children with an environment that is safe from physical harm, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.
- It is your responsibility to report any incidents of abuse or neglect to the counselor or direct supervisor within 48 hours. Or, if unavailable, report to the principal. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information arrives to the counselor. If the child is in immediate danger, keep the child safe until you reach the counsellor, principal or director.
- It is a condition of your employment at the school that if any criminal charges or convictions arise against your name related to children that you report this to the Director.

## **Interviews**

All applicants are required to undergo an interview process. The interviewer(s) must have a comprehensive understanding of child protection and have completed child protection training within the last two years.

In addition to the questions asked regarding an applicant's suitability for the role, (paid or voluntary) questions regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children must be asked.

The key areas that should be explored and discussed are:

- The applicant's beliefs and values in relation to the treatment of children and young people.
- The applicant's reasons for wanting to work with children and young people.
- The applicant's understanding of child protection measures and issues.
- The qualifications and skills that give the applicant the skills to work sensitively with children and young people
- If applicable, any reasons for leaving any previous positions that involve work with children and young people
- Any unexplained gaps in a person's resume should be explored.

## **Identity Check**

Before appointment, documents including photo identification, either a passport and driver's licence, as well as one other forms of identity document (e.g. bank card) must be presented and marked in the personnel file as "checked" or "viewed" to ensure that the person's identity is authenticated, including the date and by whom it was checked.

## **Qualifications Check**

If qualifications and training are applicable for the position, an official transcript must be viewed and marked in the personnel file as “checked” or “viewed”, including the date and by whom. If the qualification is from an obscure university or college a check on the validity of the institution is recommended.

## **Criminal History Record Check**

A criminal history record check is required for all staff. Local and international applicants must provide a criminal history check before the applicant is engaged to work at ISY. If a criminal history is revealed the director must make a decision regarding whether to employ that person at ISY.

International applicants must provide a criminal history check from the country in which they are residing at the time a contract from ISY is offered. In the case of applicants who are unable to obtain a criminal history check from the country of their previous role (due lack of formal protocols in that country), then they must provide a criminal history check from their country of origin. In addition, stringent reference checking from their last appointment is of paramount importance. *In the event a qualified candidate for substitute teaching is unable to provide a police clearance, references submitted will be checked and verified by ISY before any offer of assignment.*

## **Sex Offender Registry**

Access to Sex Offender Registries is being investigated by ISY. It is our plan to complete a registry check when possible. This will be the responsibility of our Health and Safety Administrator to investigate and document these activities.

## **Reference Checks**

Before appointment to a position, all applicants are required to submit the name and contact details of at least 2 references. The references must include at least one person who has supervised them in a previous role. The applicant must not be related to the reference.

Written references may be submitted, but they are not sufficient, solely. Verbal direct communication with references is an expectation in order to authenticate any written reference.

All volunteers, tutors or other persons not employed by ISY who have unsupervised contact with students must also have a reference check.

Reference checks should be executed by someone who has child protection training. The question schedule for the references should include some of the questions from the attached referee questions (See appendix 2.)

## **Upon Appointment**

All staff and volunteers must be inducted into the organization with a discussion regarding the central importance ISY imparts on its Child Protection Policy and its responsibility to protect

children from harm.

All new staff and volunteers must be provided with the *Child Protection Policy* and two copies of the *Code of Conduct*. A signed copy of the *Code of Conduct* must be returned within 5 days to the school administration office to be kept on record (Staff Commitment to uphold Child Protection Policy: See appendix 3).

The *Child Protection Policy* must also be made available to all parents of students at ISY.

## Section 4: Code of Conduct

This *Code of Conduct* contains practical guidelines to ensure that students are protected from intentional and unintentional harm from adults and from their own peers. The *Code of Conduct* is also designed to protect children from grooming behaviors.

The document alerts staff to the prohibition of behaviors which could be perceived as grooming or in fact constitute grooming. For example, showing favoritism towards a child, inappropriate touching of a child, making sexual jokes or references and acting outside the boundaries of the prescribed role. Enacting this Code protects students as well as the integrity of staff and volunteers.

### Breaches

Disciplinary procedures will be imposed on any person for a breach or failure to act in accordance with the *Code of Conduct*. Possible consequences of breaching this code may well depend on the seriousness of the breach and include but are not limited to:

- Counseling and training to address the behavior
- A formal warning
- Summary dismissal
- Suspension or termination of employment or voluntary role or membership
- Requirement to deliver a verbal or written apology to an aggrieved party
- Any other reasonable measure deemed appropriate by the ISY Director

In the case of a criminal act, the matter will be referred to the police and possibly the respective embassy.

Any breaches of the *Code of Conduct* will be reviewed by the Director.

### Exceptions

There may be exceptional cases where these guidelines do not apply, for example in an emergency situation where swift action needs to be taken or a life will be placed in danger, or in a situation where an unforeseen circumstance arises. However, in these cases it is imperative that if

action needs to be taken which breach these guidelines that personnel seek prior authorization from an immediate supervisor or if this is not possible, advise a supervisor immediately after the guidelines are breached and explain the context and why this action was required.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

The law is always the minimum standard for behavior within our school. Any sexual act (contact or noncontact) with a child or young person (under the age of 18) by an adult is a breach of our code of conduct and will be dealt with and reported in the same way as other reports of abuse (following the steps of disclosure). Exposing children or young people to pornographic material through any medium (a non-contact act of sexual abuse) will be treated with equal seriousness as “contact” acts of sexual abuse.

Relationships formed between older students and an ISY adult in positions of authority over them, must not become a sexual relationship for a period of 2 years past the time of the student turning 18. Although legally the young person is over the age of consent the relationship has been formed under circumstances of authority of power so the matter is one of ethics. Sexual contact involving a young person (over 18) and an adult person placed in a position of authority over them, whether consensual, or not, may be perceived to be exploitative because there is usually a disparity between young person and the adult previously in the position of responsibility for them in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence.

In the event that a young person attempts to initiate an intimate relationship, the adult must take personal responsibility for discouraging such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such actions.

## **One to One Contact With Students**

These guidelines are designed to protect students as well as the reputation and integrity and reputation of adults. Situations where students can be alone with staff members are potentially problematic for both staff and students. The following guidelines are in place to ensure that students and staff feel safe and comfortable.

- A teacher (or any other staff member employed at the school) should avoid being alone with a student in a ratio of 1:1. Efforts should be made to meet in public spaces or in places where other adults can view the activity during any activity outside of regular school hours.
- When a staff member is alone with a student, they should only be in a room where there is a window in the door, or alternatively, the door must be left open. Staff should not be in a room alone with a student where there is no window or they cannot be seen through the window or door. Windows embedded in doors should not be covered with posters or blinds. It is preferable, where possible, that tutoring take place in open spaces.

## Physical Contact

ISY does not seek to create a climate of fear, and therefore, ban all physical contact between staff and students. However, the following guidelines need to be considered:

- Contact between adult and child must be appropriate and in the best interest of the child. For example, it is acceptable for a teacher to high five a child as a greeting or as recognition of an achievement, to provide a pat on the back as encouragement or to comfort a distressed child with a hug as long as the child is in agreement. In the case of a hug this should occur in full view of other adults present and not in private.
- It is also acceptable to touch a student in order to administer first aid. In this case, it is preferable to do so in the presence of another adult when this option is available. There is no doubt that the medical safety and welfare of the student takes precedence over all else.
- There are times, within the teaching context (for example, but not limited to, PE, theatre, music, aquatics) when some physical contact may be required to assist with a particular movement. This should be done with the agreement of the student as well as paying attention to the fact that any physical contact or touching is done in a professional manner, and not near the student's private areas.
- Touching in the above circumstances should only occur when other students or staff are present and/or in physical spaces that are clearly observable at all times. If touch can be replaced by verbal instructions, then this is preferable.
- Physical contact with a student to gratify the needs of an adult is not acceptable. For example, an adult who is feeling lonely or sad and in need of a hug must not seek to meet their needs for comfort from a child or young person.
- Any physical contact that is intended to cause pain or distress to a student, for example physical punishment is unacceptable.
- Roughhousing, tickling and wrestling between a staff member and a student is prohibited.
- Any physical contact that is initiated against the will of the student is unacceptable and prohibited.

- Any touching that appears to have a sexual connotation or purpose is unacceptable. Intimate touching of a student on their breasts, buttocks or genitals will be viewed as sexual abuse. Touching a student's intimate clothing such as underwear is inappropriate.
- Any physical assistance with tasks that is unnecessary for the age, stage or physical needs of a student, for example assisting with toileting or showering when not required is prohibited.
- Physical restraint of a student is not acceptable, except as a last resort when all other measures have failed and there is an immediate risk of harm to that child or other children or people in the vicinity. Another adult must be present if these means are necessary.

## **Supervision of Students**

Appropriate supervision of students is central to creating a safe environment. Adequate adult supervision helps to prevent inadvertent or intentional harm to children from adults. Peer to peer abuse and bullying can also be prevented by monitoring the activities of children and by providing guidance, limits, support and counsel to children and young people.

- Students in grades 9 through 12 can be on campus at any time supervised minimally by security guards. Students in grades 6 through 8 can be on campus minimally supervised by security until 4:00 on school days. Elementary students should be supervised at all times.
- The school must ensure that no student is left behind on the premises or at any event off-site. Adequate supervision must be provided until the student's parent/guardian/caregiver or other authorized adult collects the child.
- The school must ensure that only authorized people may collect a student from a school event.

## **Transporting students**

- It is advisable that staff should decline all invitations to travel in cars driven by students.
- The transportation of students by staff to or from an activity in a private vehicle is strongly discouraged.

- It is recognized that is not practical to prohibit it and that from time to time school staff may be required to transport children in their own vehicle. In this instance the staff's supervisor and child's guardian must be notified.
- The School strongly discourages staff from being alone in a vehicle with a student. It is recommended that when adults transport students, another school representative or adult should be present. This action is designed to protect both the child and the adult.
- Only in the case of an emergency when all other possible options have been explored and a second adult is not available, are adults permitted to transport students alone in a vehicle. When this occurs it needs to be communicated to the parent and to the immediate supervisor before the journey takes place.
- In the case whereby the school hires a bus company to take students on an activity, care needs to be taken to ensure that a student should not be left alone with the bus driver or any other unscreened, unsupervised third party.

### **Sleeping Arrangements and Privacy When on Field Trips**

From time to time, staff may be required to accompany students on trips, including, for example, Week Without Walls and sporting matches away from home. When away on field trips with students, staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times. When arranging sleeping configurations, the following must be adhered to:

- Students have a right to feel safe and protected at all times. It is the responsibility of staff that students have sleeping arrangements that do not compromise their safety.
- A one to one bed to student ratio should be applied to all sleepover venues. In the case in which an accommodation can not supply a one to one ratio, the student's parents will be contacted. If parents and students agree, two students may share a bed.
- It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that students are not left in the care of unauthorized persons.
- Homestays are not an acceptable accommodation option for students.
- Students need to be provided with privacy when bathing, and dressing and students should not be exposed to adult nudity.

- Students should only share rooms or bedrooms with children of the same gender.
- When traveling away from home, students should have the contact details of the responsible staff member with them at all times.
- Students should have the right to contact their parent or guardian if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed at any time during their stay away from home.
- If students express or report any fear for their safety, or allegation of abuse, or discomfort in relation to their safety away from home, immediate steps must be taken to remove them from the location and follow procedures according to the Reports and Allegations section of this Policy.
- At no time should a teacher be alone with a student in a hotel room with the door closed. When rooms checks are made, there should be two adults.

## **Use of Drugs**

- The supply of alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children is prohibited and will be treated as such.
- Adults must not be under the influence of illegal drugs when responsible for the supervision of students on-site or off-site of the school.
- Adults must not be incapacitated by any other legal drug, such as prescription medicine, when responsible for students at the school on-site or off-site.
- Medication may be administered by staff to students only with written permission and instructions from the child's parents or guardian.
- No adult should transport a student while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Boundaries of Role**

- Adults employed (or volunteering) at the school must abide by the position descriptions of their role.
- If a student asks a staff member to keep a secret, the adult must explain that they cannot promise to do so.
- If adults identify that a young person requires assistance with a matter that is outside the scope of their prescribed role, they must refer to the matter to a school counselor or principal.
- Staff should not have any ongoing, unofficial contact with students outside of school hours without guardian awareness.

## **Exceptions**

The school acknowledges that the expatriate community is a relatively small community and there will be occasions when adults employed at the school have multiple connections to a particular student. For example, the student may be a friend of the adult's own child, or the adult may be friends with the child's family.

## **Photographing of Students at ISY**

Annually, parents are asked to sign a statement they have read and accept the parent handbook. This handbook will include a section giving ISY permission to photograph and publish photographs of students in authorized publications, including both digital and print media, unless a parent has specifically submitted in writing a request to the Communications Office their child not be photographed. This permission will extend only to publications authorized by the Communications Office. Teachers should avoid the publication of photographs of students unless there is prior authorization from the Communications Office in consultation with principals. At no time should any member of the faculty or staff publish photographs of the faces of students participating in school sponsored events in personal publications. Similarly, student names should never be published outside the school community with student photographs.

Only photos taken for official ISY purposes may be taken of students. Photos taken for official ISY purposes, such as classroom blogs, newsletters and classroom activities may be taken but only distributed for official ISY purposes. Approval should be received from divisional principal or communications office prior to the distribution of photographs. Photos taken for recreation or personal use are prohibited.

Staff members are discouraged from using personal devices for documentation of student work or photos. If a staff member uses a personal device, all files must be deleted from the staff member's device by the end of the trimester.

Staff asked by students to take photos with or of themselves for the student's personal publications/social media are discouraged from taking such photos without the presence of another adult. If the staff member agrees to take such a photo, it is taken at his/her own risk and is encouraged to have surroundings clearly noted within the photo.

## **Electronic Communication**

Perpetrators of child abuse sometimes use social media or other forms of electronic communication to secretly groom children for the purposes of sexual abuse or to enact forms of sexual abuse (e.g., exposure to pornography or photographing the child in forms of undress). For this reason, ISY requires that when staff and volunteers are using any electronic communication, it must be related to school matters only. For example, emails to students must be related to school matters and only be sent from a staff member's school email account. The use of social media when interacting with a student should not be for recreational purposes.

It is clear at the time of writing this policy that technology will continue to expand, and that ISY will be required review this section for relevance and risk to children on an ongoing basis as the environment changes and risks to children become apparent.

## **Locker Room/Bathroom Facilities**

The right to a child's privacy must be balanced with their need for safety and protection. Therefore School staff are required to use their discretion based on the age, developmental stage and needs of the child or young person. There may be some circumstances where a student due to their age (e.g., under 5 years old) or ability (e.g., a disabled student) needs assistance with changing but below are general principles that need to be adhered to:

- School staff are discouraged to be in one-to-one situations with a child or young person (who is not their own child) when changing in an open area in the locker room or bathroom.
- School staff are discouraged from dressing or undressing in an open area of a locker room or bathroom when children are present, unless they are changing within an individual stall.
- Male coaches, or other male staff members, must not enter female locker rooms or bathrooms and female coaches, and other staff members must not enter male locker rooms or bathrooms, except in the case of an emergency or when unoccupied.

- Cleaning staff should do most of the cleaning of the locker rooms and bathrooms before and after school hours. During school hours, any cleaning should be done during times when students should be in class. If cleaning is done during this time, cleaners should first verbally check to see if any students are in the locker rooms or bathrooms. If they are, cleaners should wait until everyone leaves. Once the cleaner is in the bathroom, a sign indicating that the bathroom is closed for cleaning should be outside the door. If a student ignores the sign, or there is an emergency, or a student enters the room for any other reason, the cleaner should leave immediately.
- Staff members should ensure that no photography of students in a state of undress occurs in the change room.

## **Gift Giving and Favoritism**

- Staff members should refrain from showing favoritism towards any particular student. Giving of small gifts to students may be culturally appropriate at times. However, staff should avoid a pattern of gift-giving to particular students.
- Favoritism behaviors could be interpreted as an adult attempting to groom a student(s). Patterns of gift giving, special favors, or other actions that exhibit favoritism should be avoided.

## **Discipline**

The school strives to create a safe and positive environment for all participants at all times. At times, students will need behavioral limits imposed. This ensures the safety of all in attendance, including adults. The guidelines regarding discipline are as follows:

- Acceptable and unacceptable behavior must be outlined and defined to students in a clear and respectful way. Please see ISY's *Secondary Parent/Student Handbook*.
- Students who do not adhere to acceptable behavioral guidelines, which are respectful to their peers and the adults in their charge, need to be given an opportunity to correct any misbehavior.
- Adults must only discipline students in a way that is fair, respectful and appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child and takes into account the child's ability and the degree of severity of the misbehavior.

- Consequences for the continuation of inappropriate or dangerous behavior must be explained to student.
- Under no circumstances, may adults engage in any behavior toward a student that is demeaning, degrading, cruel, frightening or aggressive.
- Under no circumstances, may adults punish a student in a manner that is physical in nature or administer corporal punishment (physical punishment).
- If a student does not comply with the wishes of the staff member, after clear and appropriate direction and clarification, incidents could result in detention. If inappropriate behavior continues, incidents could result in detention, parent conferences; In aggravated (or repeated) cases, suspension and expulsion may occur.

## **Use of Language and Tone of Voice**

When communicating with students, staff need to observe the following guidelines:

- Language should be clear, encouraging and aimed to affirm and encourage children's learning and well-being.
- Language that is harmful to the development and maintenance of children's self-esteem is prohibited. For example, language that is discriminatory, racist, negative, belittling, intended to frighten or intimidate the child, or is profane or sexual in nature.
- Staff need to ensure that students also respect the above guideline when communicating with their peers.

A breach of the Code of Conduct can be reported to division principals by using the Report of Concern form in *Appendix 1*.

# Section 5: Student's Rights

All students expect and deserve to be safe at School. ISY is committed to protecting all of our students from harm.

All children and young people are vulnerable to abuse by adults in positions of authority, and as such, children need to feel empowered and encouraged to voice any matters of concern that arise. It requires great courage for children to report concerns, or allegations, or incidents of any form of abuse. It is extremely important that ISY staff take student's concerns seriously at all times.

Empowerment of children and young people is important, but this does not imply that they are responsible for their own safety.

Children and young people enrolled at ISY must be made aware of their rights. They need to be informed of their right to physical, emotional and psychological safety, free from harassment and abuse.

# Section 6: Policy Review

The *Child Protection Policy* will be reviewed, a summary of cases will be created, and a summary of program and audit documents will be completed annually by a committee consisting of the counselors.

The purpose of the review is to:

- Reflect any significant experiences in the past year in relation to this Policy.
- Reflect any changes in the operating environment, including advances in technology and/or risks to children in relation to new projects or programs, incursions or excursions.
- Continuously review and upgrade best practices.
- Ensure ISY is following best practices when it comes to child protection and identify areas of improvement.
- Every three years, the Child Protection Policy will go through a comprehensive review and changes will be recommended to the committee.

The reports, along with any changes recommended by this committee, should be submitted in writing to the administration for consideration by May 15 of the given school year. Any proposed changes will need to be reviewed and ratified by the administration before being implemented.

# Section 7: Appendix

**Incident Form (*Report of Concern*):** *Appendix 1*

**Reference Check Questions:** *Appendix 2*

**Staff Commitment to Code of Conduct and  
Child Protection:** *Appendix 3*

**Managing Staff Allegations Procedure:** *Appendix 4*

**Citations and Acknowledgements:** *Appendix 5*

Appendix 1

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the staff member will report the incident using the *Report of Concern* and seek advice from the division counselor or immediate supervisor within 48 hours.

## Report of Concern

### Section 1: Report Information

Name of person making the report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person report is given to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date, Time and Location of the incident/observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student/individual: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Details of Concern

Concerns or alerts may be as a result of:

- Observed behavior in a child (physical, emotional, change in behavior)
- Hearsay (third party disclosure)
- Disclosure (specific report made by a student directly or via a trusted adult)
- Observed behavior in an adult (breach of Code of Conduct)
- A report of historical abuse/incident
  - *Provide full factual details only.*
  - *State whether you witnessed the incident or if it was reported to you.*
  - *If there was any conversation with the child, report his/her own words as closely as possible. (Continue overleaf if necessary.)*
  - *List indicators of abuse or injuries (if applicable)*

Follow up Action (if any by the reporter): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate follow up by the Counselor after receiving the report orally or in writing: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor Informed the Principal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Informed the Director Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: Student's family/guardian Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Was the family contacted in relation to this report ? Y / N If no, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, detail any discussion with the family in relation to this report: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Action taken (by the CP team) Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action taken to ensure the child's safety: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken to support the needs of the student's and the family (where required):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken to address the support needs of staff or volunteers or other students who witnessed the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any future action to be undertaken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Details/Follow up: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4: Report to any external authorities e.g. US Consulate**

Was any information shared with an external authority?      YES                              NO

**If yes, fill out the following:**

Name of external authority:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of notification:

\_\_\_\_\_

Time of notification:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and position of Person reported to:

\_\_\_\_\_

ISY representative

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Were other authorities notified? If yes, provide details:

\_\_\_\_\_

Organisational Representative(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 5: Action taken in the case of historical abuse**

Outline the wishes of the adult making the report: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Outline the School

response: \_\_\_\_\_

School

representative(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reference Checks

**Information about the nature of the relationship between the applicant and the referee and verify facts about the applicant's previous role.**

- How long have you known the applicant?
- What was your relationship to the applicant during the time you worked together?
- Is your relationship of a personal or professional nature?
- What was the nature of the work that the applicant undertook in your organizational context?

**Verification of information in resume and information provided at interview point.**

- What was the applicant's position title in your organization?
- Dates they were employed in the organization?
- Main duties and responsibilities?
- Assessment of their performance in that role?
- Weaknesses and strengths you observed?
- Willingness to seek consult with manager or someone above them on the hierarchy and seek assistance in challenging situations?
- Team player?

**Sample questions relating to applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.**

- What experience does the applicant have in working with children and young people? E.g. length of time they worked with children, age range of children, skills and abilities of children?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children in.....describe the context of the role they have applied for...
- Are you comfortable in knowing that at times the applicant may be working alone (as the sole adult) with children?
- How would you describe the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in relation to working with children and young people?
- In your opinion are there any challenges that the applicant would face in working with or engaging with children?
- Are there any age groups he/she may not be suited to work with? If yes, why?
- Does the applicant use appropriate language when communicating with children?
- Have you observed the applicant disciplining a child for misbehavior? If yes, please describe the scenario and the appropriateness of the discipline in this context.

- Can you tell me about a situation when the applicant had to handle a child who was angry and lashing out physically? Was distressed and required comforting? Was uncooperative and refused to participate?
- How did the applicant relate to the children/young people parents in the context of their work?
- Does the applicant become angry easily?
- How does the applicant deal with pressure?
- How does the applicant deal with a child/young person/staff member or parent who is demanding? Can you give an example?
- Do you know of any instances when the application has demonstrated any inappropriate physical contact with children?
- Do you know of any instances where the applicant acted outside the boundaries of their defined role?
- Have there been any findings against the applicant in relation to allegations of inappropriate behavior towards children or young people?
- Why did the applicant leave your organisation?
- Would you be willing to re-employ the applicant in your organisation or another organisation?
- Is there anything I haven't ask which you think might be important for me to know before employing this applicant to work in a role that has contact with and responsibility for children?

**Note:** These questions are designed as a guide and are not prescriptive. Select a few you wish to ask in addition to other questions of relevance relating to the role.

## Code of Conduct

ISY is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in ISY programs.

### I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone with children and/or youth at school activities without another adult being notified.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth. Adults should be aware of the possible harm and misunderstanding associated with the use of sarcasm, especially with second language learners.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
- Only take and distribute photos of students for official ISY purposes.
- Commit to upholding the ISY Protection Policy and comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ISY and with the ISY policy to report suspected child abuse (available in full on the ISY web site),
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

### I will not:

- Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.
- Give a child who is not my own a ride home alone without the knowledge of their parent or guardian.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people. Staff members and volunteers should not accept gifts from, or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- Engage in private communications with children via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving school business without the knowledge of their parents or guardians. Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth at any time.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of ISY, I am subject to a criminal history background check. My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct **and the ISY Child Protection Handbook** and that as a person working with children and youth I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from ISY.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Managing Allegations Procedures

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to outline procedures to be employed by the Allegations Team (the “Team”) should an accusation of abuse be made against an employee of The International School Yangon (the “School”). At all times, the Team will be guided by a duty to the child, a duty to the alleged perpetrator, and a duty to the law and to the School.

**Role of the Team:** Upon the receipt by the Team Leader of an accusation, the Team will meet to review the accusation and decide on the course of action. At no time should an individual team member act on an accusation without direction from the team or the Team Leader. Periodically, the Team may meet to review progress with an investigation and to advise on options or direction.

**The Team:**

- Director (Team Leader)
- Principal
- Human Resources Representative (Assistant Team Leader)
- Communications Coordinator
- Counsellor
- Representative from local community
- Outside legal counsel

**The Procedures:**

1. Upon receipt of a child protection allegation against employee of the School, that allegation should be immediately forwarded to the Team Leader. At no time should an individual team member or employee initiate an independent investigation. All evidence should be preserved, and the person who initially received the allegation should create a documented record of the information received (using ISY’s Child Protection Report of Concern would be appropriate).
2. The Team Leader will call together the Team. The Team will identify an initial course of action and who is responsible for each action. Actions may include -
  - a. Documentation of incident needed and review procedures
  - b. How to further investigate
  - c. Review of insurance policy
  - d. Communications needed (parents, faculty, community, ect.)
  - e. When and / or how to notify the employee and level of continued employment
  - f. Any help needed from outside specialists
  - g. Notification to outside agencies
3. The Team Leader will inform the Board Chair of the accusation, and keep the Board Chair informed of all actions. Together the Director and Board Chair will determine if information needs to be shared with the entire Board of Trustees and/ or external bodies.

## Citations and Acknowledgements

This document was created with help from multiple sources and individuals. Katharine Levi spent time at ISY getting to know our school and staff, and she provided the first draft of the policy. Lois Englebrecht not only conducted the first training with our staff, but was a tremendous resource in both developing the policy and advising on how to present it to the ISY community.

The child protection policy that Shanghai American School developed was a model we copied and acknowledge that we used portions of their policy word-for-word. We also referenced and used portions of the *Child Protection Handbook* created by the Association of International Schools in Africa, and *The Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook* created by Jakarta Intercultural School.

Finally, administrators and counselors at ISY developed the final details and published copy of the policy.