



Student Protection Manual 2019-2020

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
AISC Student Protection Policy (8.401)	5
Context of the AISC Community	7
Responsibility to Report and to Accreditation Agencies	8
Child Protection Laws according to the Government of India	8
Realities of Child Abuse/Neglect	9
Definitions and Possible Indicators	9
Prevention Approach	13
Student Protection Taskforce	14
Screening and Criminal Background Check	14
Employee Student Protection Agreement	15
Training for Employees and Contractors	16
Student Education	16
Parent Education	17
AISC Secure Campus	17
Supervision of Locker Rooms	17
Supporting a Child or Young Person Who Discloses Abuse	19
Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect and Next Steps	21
Response to Allegations Made Involving an AISC Employee	22
Case Management Team	23
Flowcharts for Reporting and Actions After Disclosure	25
Documenting Suspected Abuse/Neglect	27
Social Meanness, Bullying and Harassment	28
Supporting Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions	30
Self-Injury and Suicidal Behavior	33
Addenda	
Addendum A: Certificate of Guardianship	35
Addendum B: Counseling Compliance Requirement	36
Addendum C: Student Protection Agreement (Employee)	37
Addendum D: Student Protection Reporting Form (Reporter)	40

Executive Summary

Student protection is a primary responsibility of schools in all contexts across the globe. The American International School Chennai (AISC) takes this responsibility seriously and pledges to make sure that all appropriate plans and measures are taken to ensure student safety at all times. AISC is committed to integrity, compassion, and self-reflection in the area of student safety.

The AISC community has a shared moral and legal responsibility to safeguard the safety of our students. This manual details the steps required to care for our students, minimize the threat of student abuse in our school, and respond promptly and effectively should abuse be observed, suspected, or disclosed. Our student protection program will be composed of the following:

1. Recognizing, responding to, and reporting allegations and suspicions of child abuse or neglect
2. Screening and selecting employees
3. Training and education about child abuse and neglect prevention
4. A student protection agreement that guides interactions between adults and students
5. Ensuring safe environments and practices
6. Connecting to local authorities and resources
7. Ensuring student-to-student safety

Schools should be places where all students feel safe. We want to prevent student abuse before it happens, and ensure timely and appropriate detection, intervention, and reporting in the unfortunate event that it should occur.

Our intention is to ensure that if child abuse or neglect is suspected, observed, or disclosed to any member of the AISC community, that person will have the knowledge, information and resources necessary to make sure that the student is safe, the situation is communicated promptly and effectively, and that the suspicion or incident is reported to the appropriate persons.

In keeping with our Mission, Core Values, and best practices in governance policies in international schools, the AISC Board of Directors has adopted a Student Protection Policy. This policy assures that we maintain this manual and that we help guide our school toward safer, more effective, and clearer practices to safeguard the health and welfare of our students.

AISC Student Protection Policy (8.401)

It is the goal of the American International School Chennai to maintain a school environment for all students free from abuse. AISC endorses the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the host country, India, is a signatory and seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. No AISC employee may engage in any activity constituting abuse. AISC employees must report to the Head of School, section principal, or other administrator any suspected abuse either in or out of school.

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.”

At AISC we recognize that abuse can take many forms and may not always be visible or detectable. Abuse can happen in any of the four areas described below. Prevention is possible and AISC is vigilant in its efforts to protect our students.

A. Four Areas of Abuse

1. Physical Abuse – physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means upon a student by another person including willful cruelty or willful infliction of pain.
2. Emotional Abuse – this includes the use of threats, intimidation, and acts of injustice or indignity by verbal or physical means.
3. Neglect – this refers to a range of circumstances in which a parent or caregiver fails to adequately provide for a child's basic needs.
4. Sexual Abuse – sexual assault or exploitation of a student.

B. Prevention of Student Abuse

1. AISC does not hire staff who have a record of abuse. Background checks will be part of the hiring process for employees. Applicants for AISC positions will agree in writing with the terms of this policy as part of the contracting process.
2. Abuse prevention and awareness training is mandatory for AISC employees.
3. AISC will maintain an updated manual to assure correct procedures and processes remain in place to protect all students. AISC will distribute our manual annually to all employees, parents, students, and applicants.

It is also the goal of the American International School Chennai to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

The manual should include provisions for the protection of the safety and support of all students regardless of identity group.

Context of the AISC community

Abuse can occur against a background of secrecy, insularity, isolation and limited access to support resources. These factors may be present in international school communities and members of the AISC community should be aware of them in order to better safeguard students. So what are key elements of our socio-cultural context?

1. Our international school students...

- Are transient and mobility often impacts the development of their identities and relationships (especially for support in times of need).
- Mature early in some ways and remain naïve in others, especially regarding assumptions about the way things work “back home.”
- Are separated from extended families and known friendships/relationships, and may have parents who work/travel often which may result in attachment issues. Support during times of crisis or need may be minimal or non-existent.
- Are sometimes caught between multiple and conflicting cultures or value systems, which may create confusion of behavioral expectations.
- Maintain high expectations of themselves to achieve academically.

2. Our international school families...

- Are sometimes isolated from extended family and community for support.
- Are affected by one or more parents travelling frequently.
- Have conflicted feelings about their host country.
- Sometimes feel a lack of control over critical life decisions: company decides where, when and how the family moves.
- Sometimes feel a lack of stability.

3. Our international school communities...

- See school as a center of family life, which is not always able to provide the level of social, emotional, and psychological support they expect and have available in their home communities.
- Can feel isolated as a result of community diversity.
- Can feel confused by multiple norms rooted in different cultural traditions via-a-vis religious values, parenting styles, discipline, care-giving, sexuality, gender roles and responsibilities.
- Can feel confused by varying degrees of openness rooted in cultural traditions.
- Experience confusion regarding cultural attitudes toward gender issues and child development of other cultures within the community.

Responsibility to Report and to Accreditation Agencies

Child abuse and neglect – particularly sexual abuse – are among the world’s most serious concerns, with millions of cases reported to children’s protective service organizations each year. It is estimated globally that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact ([International Center for Assault Prevention](#)). Yet, it is also estimated that much abuse is underreported either because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, or the adults who observe or suspect the abuse are unsure of what to do.

International schools have a moral as well as legal duty to safeguard the welfare of our students, as well as those children using our facilities or involved with our programs and activities. The AISC Student Protection Manual sets forth the steps our employees, students, volunteers, contractors, and consultants are required to take to minimize the threat of child abuse in our schools and to respond promptly and effectively should abuse be observed, suspected, or disclosed.

International schools are responsible to meet the program and best practice standards of various accrediting agencies around the world; in some places international schools must also meet accreditation standards of the host country as well. It is important for international schools to be knowledgeable about and respond to recent changes in standards of accreditation. The Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Middle States Association (MSA) have added specific standards related to Child Protection Programs in their most recent edition of accreditation standards. It is the expectation of the AISC community that the school stays current with accrediting agency standards.

Child Protection Laws according to the Government of India

A summary of the national child protection legislation in India can be found on the following website.

<https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ICMEC-India-National-Legislation-Updated-3-2018.pdf>



Realities of Child Abuse and Neglect

1. 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. When abuse is within the family, the transient lifestyle increases the risk to international school students, who tend not to have access to outside resources, and therefore cannot get help.
2. Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to react to dangerous situations.
3. Research-based programs prepare students to develop skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from perpetrators and behaviors that include bullying, harassment and other forms of exploitation.
4. The reality is that there is no excuse for child abuse. No culture supports harming children.
5. Research shows that child abuse occurs in all racial, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural sectors of society
6. International schools are bound by laws of the host country and must be knowledgeable and compliant with the student protection laws in the host country.

Definitions and Possible Indicators

Definitions of abuse are complex and usually based in the child-rearing behaviors, gender and role responsibilities, and social expectations of different cultures throughout the world. 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, either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides many of the definitions that are based in understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

It is important to note that behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning/ scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child.

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physically abused children find it difficult relating to their peers and the adults around them. The constant threat of violence at home makes them perpetually

vigilant and mistrustful, and they may be overly domineering and aggressive in their attempts to predict and control other people's behavior, or extremely reserved and withdrawn. They are also vulnerable to instances of overwhelming emotional responses to everyday situations.

Physically abused children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Injuries to the body in places that aren't normally exposed to falls, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- 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
- Chronically run away
- Excessive need to use the toilet without medical reason
- Inappropriate clothing (extra baggy or very revealing)
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the most common form of child abuse. It refers to 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; having 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 by itself.

Some parents who are emotionally abusive practice forms of child-rearing that are orientated towards fulfilling their own needs and goals, rather than those of their children. Their parenting style may be characterized by overt aggression towards their children, including shouting and intimidation, or they may manipulate their children using more subtle means, such as emotional blackmail.

Emotional abuse does not only occur in the home. Children can be emotionally abused by teachers and other adults in a position of power over the child. Children can also be emotionally abused by other children in the form of "bullying".

Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Emotionally abused people are often more withdrawn and emotionally disengaged than their peers, and find it difficult to predict other people's behavior, understand why they behave in the manner that they do, and respond appropriately.

Emotionally abused children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- Have low self-esteem
- Highly anxious
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Chronically run away
- Compulsively steal
- Obsessions or phobias
- Show delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Experience difficulties with school attendance
- Find it difficult to make friends
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Experience incontinence and mysterious pains
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying
- Delayed physical, mental and emotional development
- Inappropriate need for physical contact

Neglect

It is generally understood that "neglect" refers to a range of circumstances in which a parent or caregiver fails to adequately provide for a child's basic needs:

- food, shelter and clothing
- access to medical care when necessary
- supervision, care, love and support
- appropriate moral and legal guidance
- regular school attendance

Note: AISC requires one parent be a full-time resident of Chennai. Should parents / guardian leave the city/country for any reason then the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary Change of Guardian Forms are available from AISC (Addendum A). These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the city/country.

Possible Indicators of Neglect

Neglected children exhibit a range of signs, including:

- Child is unwashed, hungry and/or improperly clothed
- 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 guardian are absent from Chennai for any period of 24 hours or greater
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency

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. Activities involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts during which a child is intentionally touched either directly or through clothing, on the genitals, anus, or breasts for other than hygiene or care purposes. Non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways is also sexual abuse. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

1. Pain or irritation to the genital area
2. Vaginal or penile discharge
3. Excessive toilet usage without medical reason
4. Difficulty with urination
5. Sexually transmitted disease (STD)
6. Fear of people or places
7. Aggression
8. Regressive behaviors, bedwetting or stranger anxiety
9. Excessive masturbation
10. Sexually provocative behavior
11. Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
12. Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
13. Suffering from what seem to be physical ailments that can't be explained medically
14. Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult
15. Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or older student
16. Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities
17. Sexual behavior, language, or knowledge too advanced for their age
18. Change in clothing style (extra baggy or very revealing)

In addition to knowing the signs of victimization, below are some early warning signs to look out for in potential offenders:

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

- Gives private gifts or has private chats on Facebook/internet

Prevention Approach

At AISC, we have a student protection taskforce that consists of the school psychologist, a counselor from each section, and an administrator from each section. This group ensures that AISC has an up-to-date and comprehensive, pro-active approach to student protection that includes:

1. Student Protection Taskforce

- Implements the Student Protection Manual
- Sets the schedule for lessons and other student protection tasks for the school year
- Keeps up-to-date research on best practices
- Addresses teacher reluctance to report
- Conducts internal audit

2. Screening and Criminal Background Checks

- Written application/statement of suitability
- Reference check
- Criminal history background check
- Sex offender registry

3. Student Protection Agreement and an Awareness of Power Differential and the Responsibility to Maintain Appropriate Boundaries

- Use of discretion when touching children
- How to handle one-on-one meetings
- Prohibition against smoking, drinking, profanity, sexual innuendo or jokes around students
- Use of social media, text, email
- Compliance with reporting policies/protocols
- Must be read by all current/potential employees and signed to acknowledge receipt

4. Education and Training for the Three Stakeholder Groups at AISC

- Teachers – awareness, types, signs/symptoms, prevention, policies and laws, reporting process, student curriculum, 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 – school safety goals and objectives, how to talk with their children, local authority and resources available.

5. Community Partnership Resources

- Sexual Harassment Team
- US Consulate

6. Measurement, Analysis, Self-Audits

- Compliance and quality/effectiveness
- Annual self-audit to assess the policy and procedure
- Continuous quality improvement
- Effectiveness and measurement

Student Protection Taskforce

The student protection taskforce consists of a counselor and administrator from each section, School Psychologist, Athletic and Activities Director and the Head of School or Chief Business Officer. The role of the taskforce is to ensure that there is a comprehensive student protection program in place at the school and to annually monitor the effectiveness of the program. Specific tasks include:

- Ensure a comprehensive student protection program is in place
- Work within the school's existing structures to ensure development and adoption of a student protection curriculum to meet school needs
- Ensure that student protection curriculum is taught and assessed annually
- Support teachers and counselors in implementing student protection curriculum
- Ensure/guide training for all staff that have direct/indirect contact with students regarding the student protection program
- Ensure/guide parent evening education programs to support understanding of the objectives and goals of the policy/curriculum
- Serve as a resource group in working with cases requiring student protection

The student protection taskforce will meet at least twice annually. Minutes of meetings will be recorded and shared with the taskforce.

Screening and Criminal Background Check

A vital means of preventing student abuse at AISC is to screen out potential abusers before working at our school. Background checks for all employees, inclusive of a review of all criminal and sexual offender records, are required. AISC also reserves the right to conduct background checks at any time after employment. Further, any misrepresentations, falsifications, or omissions in the information provided by the applicant, whenever discovered, may result in termination of employment.

Employee Student Protection Agreement

Each year all AISC will endorse their understanding of this agreement on the Student Protection Agreement (Addendum C). This Student Protection Agreement applies to all employees (faculty and staff) who represent the school. Aspects of this agreement are detailed below.

It is important to acknowledge that the public and private conduct of AISC employees can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We should be aware of our own and other people's vulnerability, especially when working alone with students, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, or harasses.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially students, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern or celebration. AISC personnel are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with students can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with students are best held in a public area – in a room where the interaction can be observed – or in a room with the door left open. Classroom windows should not be covered.

School-sponsored overnight trips will have male and female chaperones when both girls and boys are on the trip and at least two chaperones for overnight trips, unless approved by the section principal.

Communication with students is governed by the key safety concept of transparency. Employees should be mindful of the following guidelines:

- All electronic and written communications with students should be related to a student's school life -- in support of student learning, success, and healthy growth and development.
- When using other electronic communication modes, including social media and text messaging, messages should relate to a student's school life.
- Electronic communications with students are to be made, whenever possible, using a school email or other communication platform. Any electronic communication that takes place over a school network may be subject to review and/or monitoring.

AISC employees should be very cautious concerning counseling students about sensitive issues. If such conversations are occurring, a counselor should be informed. Counselors, too, should seek consultation as required by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) code of ethics. AISC employees should never agree to or suggest that confidential discussions be kept from school officials or parents when these involve potential abuse.

Employees should refrain from the illegal possession of drugs at all times, and from the use of tobacco products and alcohol when in the presence of students. Employees should never buy alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or inappropriate video/reading material to give to students. Employees should not privately accept gifts from, nor give gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents or guardians and an administrator.

Employees are mandated to report suspected abuse to a section counselor, school psychologist, or section principal (see “reporting abuse and next steps,”). Reports should be made within 24 hours of observing or reasonably suspecting abuse to the section counselor, school psychologist or section principal. Reasonable suspicion is described as a person being reasonably objective to entertain suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a similar person of similar experience and training to suspect abuse of a student. No person at AISC making a report in good faith will be penalized by the school for making the report.

Training for Employees and Contractors

All employees of the school participate in annual training to build awareness of student protection concerns, types of abuse and neglect, signs/symptoms, prevention, policies and laws, reporting process, student curriculum and community resources. New faculty and staff that commence during the school year are trained before commencing work with students.

Student Education

Research shows that age appropriate personal safety/abuse prevention programs for children are successful when they are based on the most current research in prevention education.

Student protection education aims to assist students to develop skills to:

- Recognize abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- Understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- Understand ways of keeping themselves safe.

Given the importance of protecting all students at AISC we do not seek permission from parents to have their child participate in this curriculum, we encourage parents/caregivers to seek further clarification if required and to provide their teacher or counsellor with any relevant information about their child that could alleviate any concerns.

Dependent on grade level, students will receive instruction in this curriculum during their homeroom class, health class, advisory or HS seminar.

Parent Education

Student protection at school is a partnership with parents. Through the PCA and school-organized parent coffees, abuse education and training lessons will be provided. Topics covered may include:

- Understanding of school policies and procedures related to abuse and neglect
- Understanding of the school's student protection curriculum
- Signs and symptoms of abuse
- Awareness of risks to which students are exposed
- How to talk to children and prevention strategies
- Handling disclosure and reporting as a parent
- Community resources

AISC Secure Campus

To maintain the safety of students on the AISC campus, adults (foreign or local) identified as a potential risk of harm to students will not be permitted to enter the property. These adults will have their identity noted with AISC security and will not be permitted access to the drop off area or campus.

Potential risk will be assessed and determined by review of the School Psychologist, Director of Teaching and Learning, Chief Business Officer and Head of School. It is important to note that this assessment is not a legal judgment and is made only to protect students from potential harm.

Supervision of Locker Rooms

It should not be necessary for adults to remain in the room in order to maintain good behaviour; being in close proximity and pupils being aware of this should be enough. Pupils should know however that adults will enter the room if necessary - in response to a disturbance, for example.

Staff should also consider the following:

- Establish a code of behaviour with pupils so they are clear about the expectations of their conduct whilst they are unsupervised.
- If there is a need for an adult to enter the room, it is recommended they should alert pupils to this by announcing it to give pupils the opportunity to cover up if they want to.

- Where possible, female staff should supervise girls and male staff should supervise boys.
- All adults should avoid just standing in the changing room watching pupils, or repeatedly going in and out without good reason.
- Pupils who express concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or other pupils should be listened to, and appropriate enquiries should be conducted by the relevant section Case Management Team.

Supporting a Child or Young Person Who Discloses Abuse

Adults working with children and young people must understand and know how to respond appropriately to disclosures from students, knowing that it is often very difficult for them to disclose abuse. Children and young people often cannot easily talk about an abuse problem because they may:

- Try to “forget” in order to cope
- Worry *they* will lose the love of their parents or friends
- Fear the shame of abuse or getting in trouble for telling (especially older children)
- Fear they will be blamed, as adults tend to be believed more than children
- Be under threat by the offender to harm them or their family if they tell

It is important that you remain calm and in control of your feelings in order to reassure and support the child or young person. If a student asks to speak with you, find a neutral setting where you can have quiet, and few interruptions.

Possible ways you can show your care and concern

- listen carefully to what the child or young person is saying
- refrain from expressions of panic or shock
- reassure the child or young person that you believe them and that to disclose was the right thing to do
- acknowledge that it is hard to talk about such things
- indicate what you will do, i.e. that you will talk to someone who can give you some advice about what should happen next
- reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame (only if the child indicates this is what they believe)
- if you are not in a position to answer all the questions that a child or young person may have, explain that you don't know but will pass on their questions or concerns to the relevant person

You will not be helping the child if you:

- probe the student into telling details; instead, just listen, letting him/her explain in his/her own words
- express anger or disgust about the alleged abuser
- make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone; or promises to the student that things will get better
- seek further details beyond those that the child or young person freely wants to discuss
- confront the abuser

Remember that quizzing children about details may be interpreted as disbelief. Your role is to support and listen to the child or young person, not to conduct an investigation.

Respect the student's confidence. Share with a counselor, psychologist or principal, but limit information to other staff. Write down the basic information, in the student's words if possible. Explain to the student that you must tell someone else to get help. Try to let the student know that someone else also will need to talk with him/her and explain why.

If the student does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency. Report to a counselor immediately.

If you suspect abuse, but the child or young person has not told anyone, speak to your section counselor, school psychologist or principal for support.

Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect and Next Steps

(Flow chart on page 25)

Step 1

Students are encouraged to report incidents for which they themselves or others may be the victims. Reporting by students may be verbal, or in writing, and shared with any school employee. When a child reports potential abuse/neglect or circumstances indicate potential abuse or neglect, the teacher will seek advice from a section counselor and/or school psychologist within 24 hours. Employees will be asked to complete the Student Protection Reporting Form (Addendum D) at this stage to record their concerns.

Step 2

The counselor and principal gather preliminary information and provide written documentation including date, person or persons involved, and any additional relevant information. They will then form a Case Management Team consisting of the section counsellor, section principal/associate principal, psychologist and nurse (as appropriate) to address the report. Led by the section principal, the team will discuss the case and identify what information needs to be gathered to make a decision of whether there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect. The team will take care to protect the alleged victim(s), the alleged perpetrator(s), and the reporter by restricting information access to those who need and have the authority to know.

The following actions will be considered as part of the inquiry:

- Discussions between the student and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with toys to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Interviews with staff members and/or family members as necessary and document information relative to the case, which should include a physical examination by school medical officer and subsequent report inclusive of photographs, whenever possible.
- Consultation with school personnel to review the child's history in the school.
- Meeting with others pertinent to the case, including the alleged perpetrators.
- Report status of case to Head of School.

The following description of reasonable suspicion should be considered in determining whether or not there is sufficient reason to suspect abuse or neglect. Reasonable suspicion means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse/neglect.

Step 3

In situations where the Case Management Team agrees that there is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that **may** take place are:

- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns
- AISC provides support for the child and family
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling
- Consultation with local authorities
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern 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
- Consultation with the school or another attorney
- Consultation with local NGO specializing in support of abuse victims (Tulir, Childline)

In situations where there is no reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect the Case Management Team will still consider whether the provision of support to the child and family would be beneficial.

In all situations it is essential that a member of the Case Management Team follows up with the person who reported the concern. It is also important that follow up activities are conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

Once the team has developed and enacted an action plan they will allocate a case manager to follow up on the following as applicable.

- Maintain contact with the child and family
- Provide the child's teachers resource materials and strategies for supporting the student
- Maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school

Response to Allegations Made Involving an AISC Employee

(Flow chart on page 26)

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves an employee of AISC, the same steps described above will be followed in conjunction with the following actions.

Inquiry

1. AISC employees who are involved in or formally accused of abuse will immediately be removed from any contact with students and the school

administration will quickly set up an inquiry into the situation (as per Board Policy 6.810).

2. The Head of School will determine who will lead the inquiry. This leader of the inquiry will conduct a prompt, confidential and thorough inquiry to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to believe that abuse occurred. A written report will be submitted to the Head of School.
3. The leader of the inquiry will forward reports to the Head of School. If an employee in the reporting chain is implicated, the report should go to the next level. If the Head of School is implicated, the board chair should be informed.

Consequences

1. If the inquiry indicates that reasonable grounds do not exist to support allegations of abuse, a statement to that effect will be given by the Head of School to the AISC employee in question.
2. AISC employees who violate any of the regulations above will, at a minimum, be officially reprimanded in writing. This will take place in a meeting involving the Head of School, and/or section principal. The first offense may lead to immediate termination depending on the circumstances.
3. If inappropriate behavior did exist but does not constitute abuse, the perpetrator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences.
4. If the inquiry indicates that reasonable grounds do exist to believe that abuse has occurred, the Head of School will submit a copy of the report to the board chair.
5. The Head of School will determine suitable disciplinary action, which could result in termination of employment. Legal action by the Indian police is also a possible consequence outside the purview of these regulations.

Case Management Team (CMT)

When there is an allegation of abuse, the school will endorse the CMT to respond to that specific allegation. The team will consist of the following individuals:

- Section Counselor
- Section Principal
- Psychologist
- Nurse, if appropriate

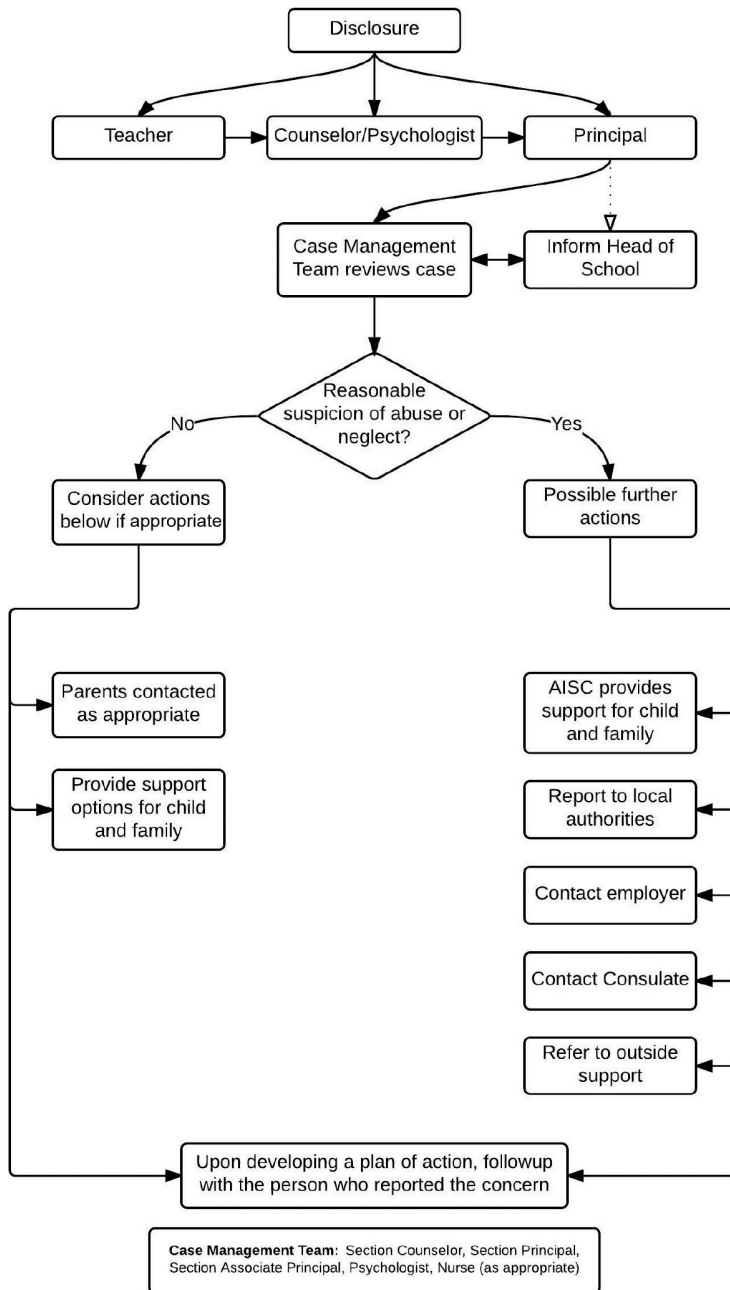
The purpose of this team is to manage a suspected case of abuse or neglect. Effective management of an allegation by this team is guided by three duties:

1. **The duty to children:** To keep children safe and act in the best interests of victims and children in your school or elsewhere. This takes precedence over all other duties and includes providing support for all children affected; ensuring the continuity of education and delivery of services to children; ensuring that the best interests of the victim are the primary consideration in decision-making; where possible, taking into account the victim's wishes and

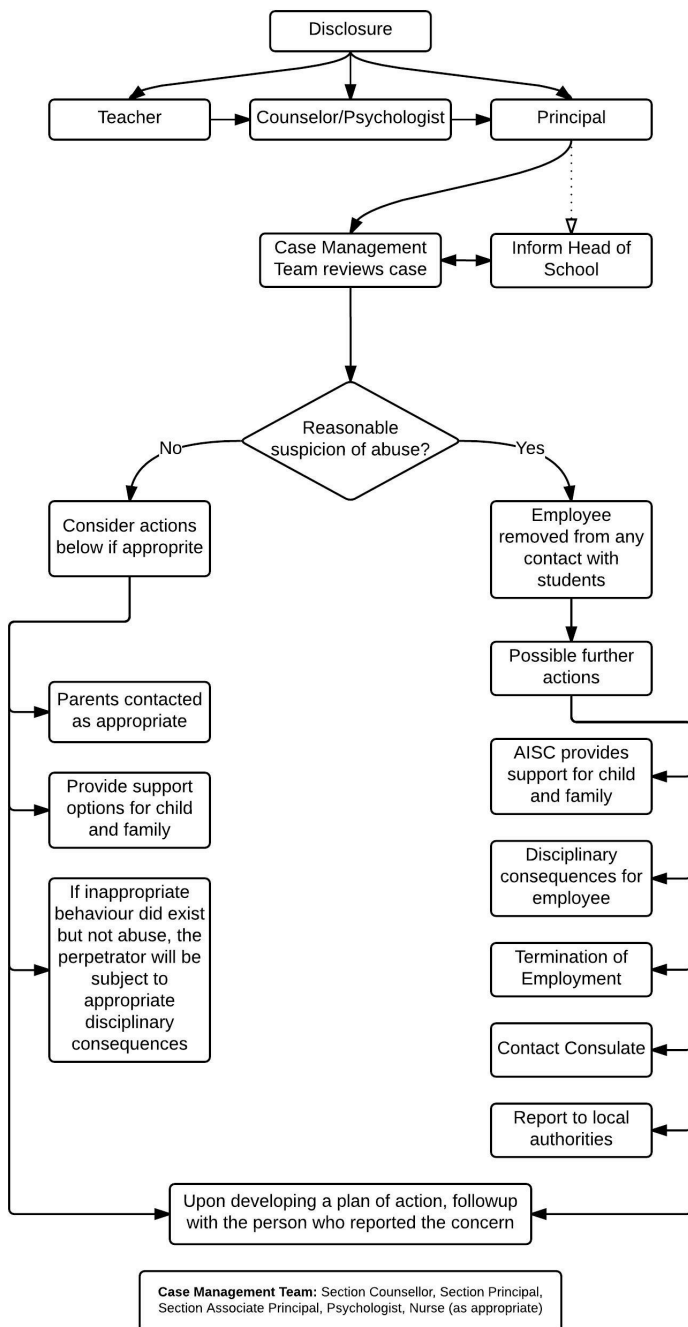
feelings when making decisions, while recognizing that the ultimate decision lies with adults; working with the parents unless to do so would jeopardize the welfare of a child; and working across agency and institutional boundaries to protect children.

2. **The duty to the alleged perpetrator:** Ensuring that their rights are upheld (including their employment and privacy rights) and that the principles of natural justice are followed. These principles require schools to provide alleged perpetrators with notice of the allegation and an opportunity to respond.
3. **The duty to the law and mandatory reporting obligations:** Ensuring that local and international legal obligations are complied with; allegations are reported promptly to relevant external agencies; and that the school's immediate actions protect as far as possible the integrity of any future criminal investigation.

Student Protection Incident Response



Student Protection Incident Response (AISC Employee Involved)



Documenting Suspected Abuse/Neglect

All reporting adults will be asked to complete the student protection reporting form (Addendum D) when they report concerns to a counselor, principal or psychologist. The form serves the purpose of recording the concerns factually.

The following information will be collected and filed:

- Notes from Case Management Team discussions
- Emails that pertain to the case
- Description of action taken
- Correspondence with the student
- Correspondence with the student's family
- Correspondence with external agencies

All documentation of the case will be filed in the psychologist's files.

Social Meanness, Bullying and Harassment

We believe that every child has the right to learn in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Social meanness, harassment and bullying are not acceptable behaviors at AISC. We, as a school, undertake proactive and preventive approaches to ensure a safe environment. Our policy is to promote a positive school environment in the classroom, common areas, and at school-sponsored activities.

It is also the goal of AISC to maintain a safe and supportive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, size or weight.

Mean behavior is purposeful and hurtful, but may happen only once or twice. It can be exhibited through acts such as teasing or name-calling, social exclusion, insults, threats, hitting, pushing, kicking and may occur either in person or electronically. Bullying is defined as any of the above acts that are intentionally cruel, usually repeated, and with a social or interpersonal power imbalance, where one person feels they do not have the power to stop it.

Mean behavior, harassment and bullying can take many forms including social, verbal, online, and/or physical incidents and, in addition to the examples above, might include:

Physical Aggression: Unwelcome physical contact, inflicting bodily harm, physical contact with sexual overtones

Social Alienation: Public humiliation, malicious exclusion, malicious rumor mongering, threats of isolation

Verbal Aggression: Intimidating phone calls, texts, emails, verbal threats of aggression of property and possessions, verbal threats of bodily harm; and/or

Intimidation: Extortion, taunting, threats toward family members, coercion, use of demeaning nicknames, catcalling.

For the purposes of these guidelines, harassment and bullying consist of the repeated exposure over time to negative actions targeted at a specific victim(s). However, should the act be grievous, repeated exposure is unnecessary for the behavior to be considered in violation of the school's behavioral expectations and for disciplinary action to be taken.

Guidelines for Situations Involving Social Meanness, Bullying or Harassment

Consistent with processes for resolving other complaints or grievances at AISC, reports of harassment and bullying will be resolved at the lowest level possible. Therefore, a member of the school community who believes he or she has been

subjected to harassment or bullying should first consider telling the person(s) that the conduct is offensive and request them to stop.

If it is difficult for a student to speak directly to the person, or if the offensive behavior does not stop after the request to cease, or if the student or parent feel that they need assistance with an ongoing issue of social meanness or bullying, they should bring it to the attention of a teacher, section counselor and/or section Principals. The situation will be assessed as either a counseling issue or a discipline issue and referred accordingly for further action. These actions will be developmentally appropriate and may range from a session with the counselor to disciplinary meetings with the administration. For serious incidents of misconduct, consequences may include suspension or expulsion from AISC.

Note: A person who knowingly makes a false report of harassment and bullying may also be considered to have violated this policy, and subject to the courses of action and consequences herein.

Education and Prevention

The prevention of social meanness and bullying requires a thoughtful educational program. The school will include in its educational program, information about social meanness and bullying as appropriate (for example classroom guidelines, character education) so that everyone will understand the intention of this policy, the appropriate ways to interact with others, and what to do if a person feels they are being impacted by social meanness or bullying as defined by the policy.

Supporting Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions

These guidelines for supporting students, staff and community members with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions are based on practices most consistently identified in current research and educational literature as effective and appropriate in the creation of learning environments that are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe for students, staff, families and all other members of the school community.

Best practices include:

1. Providing supports that respond to an individual's needs
2. Respecting an individual's right to self-identification
3. Maintaining school records in a way that respects privacy and confidentiality
4. Ensuring dress codes respect an individual's gender identity and gender expression
5. Enabling students with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions to have full, safe and equitable participation in curricular and extracurricular activities
6. Providing safe access to washroom and change-room facilities
7. Providing professional learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff to understand and support diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions
8. Using a comprehensive whole-school approach to promote healthy relationships and prevent and respond to bullying behaviour
9. Ensuring students have the understanding, skills and opportunities to contribute to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self
10. Ensuring all families are welcomed and supported as valued members of the school community
11. Ensuring that school staff have work environments where they are protected from discrimination based on their sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions

Privacy and Confidentiality

All persons, including students, have a right to privacy, and this includes the right to keep one's sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression private at school. There is no need for everyone in the school to know whether a student is transgender or gender diverse, particularly if they are new to the school. For the student, making decisions about what information is shared, with whom and when, is crucial to their health and wellbeing. All decisions about sharing information should be made with their explicit consent (or parental consent for students unable to give

explicit consent). Information should only be shared with those who have an appropriate reason to know and be limited to what they need to know.

If a student is transitioning, the school shall act in accordance with the following developmentally appropriate guidelines, with the understanding that each student situation should be handled according to the maturity of each individual student, while still respecting that student's rights. It is important to note that not all transitions are binary, meaning male-to-female or female-to-male.

Generally, the parent or guardian will inform the school of an impending transition. However, it would be appropriate for the section counselor or school psychologist to approach the family of a student if school staff believes that a gender identity or expression issue is presenting itself at school and creating difficulty for the student. Together, the family and school can then identify appropriate steps to support the student.

By MS/HS, notification of the student's parents or guardians about their gender identity, gender expression, or transition may be unnecessary, as they may already be aware and supportive. In some cases, however, notifying parents or guardians carries risks for the student, such as being kicked out of the home. Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding the transition process, the section counselor or school psychologist will work closely with the student to assess the degree to which, if at all, the parent or guardian will be involved in the process and must consider the health, wellbeing, and safety of the transitioning student.

Name and Pronouns

Every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. Regardless of whether a transgender or gender diverse student has legally changed their name or gender, AISC will allow such students to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. Some transgender and gender diverse youth may feel most comfortable being addressed by gender-neutral pronouns such as "they" or "ze" or just referred to by their names (without pronouns). If the student has previously been known at AISC by a different name, the section counselor will direct faculty to use the student's chosen name and preferred pronouns. To ensure consistency among departments of the school, every effort will be made to immediately update student education records with the student's chosen name and appropriate gender markers. Records with the student's birth name and gender will be kept in a separate, confidential file.

Access to School Facilities

Having safe access to washrooms and change-rooms is important to the health and wellbeing of all people, including those who identify as transgender and gender diverse. Students are allowed to use the washrooms and change-rooms consistent with their gender identity, unless they request alternate accommodations. Any student, transgender or otherwise, who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of underlying reasons, also has the right to access a single-user restroom,

such as a staff washroom. However, the single-user washroom will not be given as the only option for transgender or gender diverse students.

Overnight Trips

Students have the opportunity to room with peers that match their gender identity, and AISC will work to pair transgender students with peers and, when relevant, with homestay families with whom there is a mutual level of comfort. Whether or not roommates know about the student's gender identity, the school has an obligation to maintain the student's privacy and cannot require disclosure of the student's transgender status to the other students or their parents. The school will consider requests for alternative sleeping arrangements for any student, transgender or otherwise, who has a need or desire regardless of underlying reasons.

Dress Code

Students have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the AISC dress code.

Education

Educating the school community about diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions is an important strategy in creating a safer and more inclusive school. AISC will look to include these topics as part of the teaching and learning program for students, faculty and parents.

Self-Injury and Suicidal Behavior

A growing awareness of self-injury and suicidal behavior internationally has indicated that school communities play an important role in recognizing and supporting students in distress.

Definitions and Possible Indicators

Self-injury is the deliberate, self-inflicted destruction of body tissue, causing pain or injury to oneself, without suicidal intent and for purposes not socially sanctioned. Self-injury is most often a demonstration of an unhealthy coping mechanism for dealing with emotional distress. While signs of self-injury are not always immediately evident, they may include:

- Fresh cuts, scars, burns, scabs, etc.
- Wearing long pants or long sleeves in hot weather and/or pulling sleeves down over one's hands
- Appearance of wristbands, bandages, etc.
- Far-fetched stories explaining injury

Suicidal behaviour is any intentional action that can result in death. While there are not always signs that someone is considering suicide, some signs that might indicate someone is thinking about ending their life include:

- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Mentioning death or suicide often, even in a joking way
- Being suddenly upbeat and cheerful after a long period of low mood
- Giving away possessions or spending unusually large amounts of money
- Having trouble concentrating on anything and spending excessive amounts of time day dreaming

While both behaviors are grouped together in this manual as they both involve deliberately hurting oneself, it is important to recognize the different reasons for this behavior. Students who exhibit suicidal behavior are doing so with the intention of ending their life. On the other hand, people who self-injure do not normally want to die, but are in extreme psychological distress and find that hurting themselves provides relief, provides something else to focus on, and in some cases, is a way of communicating to other people that they need help. Both behaviors indicate that a person is having a really tough time and needs help and support to feel better.

Reporting

Both behaviors can be brought to the attention of school faculty and staff through a variety of channels. A student may self-disclose directly to an adult, a student may disclose to a peer and that peer may bring the behavior to the attention of staff, a peer may report suspected self-injury/suicidal, or an adult may notice signs directly or suspect self-injurious/suicidal behavior.

Any reasonable suspicions that a student is engaging in or at risk of engaging in either self-injurious or suicidal behavior should be reported to that student's section counselor or the school psychologist.

Ideally, the section counselor or school psychologist will have the opportunity to talk to the student following a physical assessment by the nurse (if required). Like many student behaviors at school, the response will be somewhat context-dependent. In talking with the student the counselor/psychologist will inquire about self-injury/suicidal behaviors and evaluate the student's protective and risk factors. The student and counselor/psychologist will then work together on identifying supports that need to be in place to keep the student safe. This may involve: identifying alternative coping strategies, developing a safety plan, and informing the student's parent/care-provider (unless doing so places the student at further risk of harm).

Note: If a student is in immediate danger, the school's emergency protocol should be enacted by first contacting security, followed by the nurse and then the nearest section office.

Addenda

Addendum A: Certificate of Guardianship

Date: _____

Father's Name: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____

Grade(s): _____

Certificate applicable from: _____ to: _____

We hereby certify that on certain days, due to reasons beyond our control, we may not be reachable or be in Chennai and unable to perform our duties as parents when our child/children are in school. In these circumstances we have decided to appoint guardians for our children.

In addition, in the event of an emergency or non-emergency situation requiring medical treatment, we hereby grant permission for any and all medical and/or dental attention to be administered to my child/children, due to an accidental injury or illness, until such time as we can be contacted. This permission includes, but is not limited to, the administration of first aid, the use of an ambulance, and the administration of anesthesia and/or surgery, under the recommendation of qualified medical personnel.

The American International School Chennai is authorized to deal with the guardians listed below for any and all issues concerning our child/children.

Guardian 1

Guardian 2

Name: _____ Name: _____

Residing at: _____ Residing at: _____

ID number: _____ ID number: _____

Document type: _____ Document type: _____

Contact no: _____ Contact no: _____

SIGNED

Father

Mother

Guardian 1

Guardian 2

For Office Use: ☐ Shared with Health Office

Addendum B: Counseling Compliance Requirement

Our Mission and Core Values reflect a school community dedicated to the development of each and every student of the school. At AISC, we are committed and have a duty to care, protect and preserve the safety, health and well-being of all students so that they can make their unique contribution to a diverse and dynamic world. In order to effectively maintain the safety of all students, AISC counselors and administrators have the right in all situations to speak with students privately and confidentially. Should a parent refuse to allow a school official to speak with a child, the school reserves the right to take appropriate measures. In extreme circumstances, measures could include, but are not limited to, denying the student access to the school premises until such time that the family agrees to appropriate private and confidential conversations or counseling. These measures would be taken in the best interest of students' safety and well-being.

Addendum C: Student Protection Agreement

(To be signed by AISC employees)

I pledge to follow the Student Protection Manual and abide by the guidelines of the Student Protection Agreement (below) as a condition of my being employed by AISC.

I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Never be alone on weekends or evenings with students at school or away from school without another adult being notified.
- Report within 24 hours of observing or reasonably suspecting abuse to a section principal, section counselor, or school psychologist
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of students.
- Exercise care with my use of language in my professional capacities.

I will not:

- Touch or speak to a student in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Intentionally expose students to embarrassment or disparagement.
- Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol, or illegal drugs in the presence of students while in a professional capacity or personal capacity outside normal family and social events.
- Accept intimate and elaborate gifts or give private gifts to students without the knowledge of their parents/guardians and section administrator.
- Engage in private communications with students using social media in ways that are outside my professional relationship with students.

I understand that as a person working with students under the auspices of AISC, I am subject to a criminal background check. My signature confirms that I have read this Student Protection Agreement and that as a person working with students I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this student protection agreement or failure to take action mandated by this student protection agreement may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from AISC.

Name: _____

Date/ Signature: _____

- C. பின் இணைப்பு C: மாணவர் பாதுகாப்பு உடன்படிக்கை
(ஏ ஐ எஸ் எரி ஊழியர்கள் கையொப்பம் இடவேண்டியது)

நான் ஏ ஐ எஸ் எரி யில் பணியில் இருப்பதற்கான ஒரு நிபந்தனையாக மாணவர் பாதுகாப்புக் கையேட்டைப் பின்பற்றுவேன் என்றும் கீழ்க்காணும் மாணவர் பாதுகாப்பு உடன்படிக்கையில் உள்ள நெறிமுறைகளின் படி நடந்து கொள்வேன் என்றும் உறுதிமொழி ஏற்கிறேன்.

நான் செய்ய வேண்டியவை :

1. எல்லாரையும் மரியாதையோடும் பொறுமையோடும் நேர்மையாகவும் நன்னயத்தோடும் கண்ணியமாகவும் பரிவேடும் நடத்துவேன்.
2. வயது வந்த மற்றொரு நபருக்குத் தெரியப்படுத்தாமல் பள்ளி அல்லது பள்ளிசாரா செயல்பாடுகளின் போது, வார இறுதி நாட்களிலோ, மாலை நேரத்திலோ மாணவர்களுடன் தனிமையில் இருக்கமாட்டேன்.
3. மாணவர் தவறாக நடத்தப்படுவதைக் கண்ணுற்றாலோ அல்லது அப்படியொரு நியாயமான ஐயப்பாடு எனக்கு எழுந்தாலோ அது பற்றி ஓர் பிரிவு முதல்வரிடமோ, வகுப்பு அறிவுரை வழங்குபவரிடமோ அல்லது பள்ளி உளவியல் நிபுணரிடமோ அறிவிப்பேன்.
4. மாணவர் தவறாக நடத்தப்படுவது குறித்த எந்த விசாரணையின் போதும் நான் முழுமையாக ஒத்துழைப்பேன்.
5. என் வேலையின் போது நான் பயன்படுத்தும் சொற்கள் குறித்துக் கவனமாக இருப்பேன்.

நான் செய்யக் கூடாதவை:

1. பாலியல் ரீதியாகவோ அல்லது வேறு தகாத முறையிலோ மாணவரைத் தொடவோ அல்லது அவரிடம் பேசவோ மாட்டேன்.
2. மாணவர்களை வேண்டுமென்றே சங்கடத்துக்கோ அமமானத்துக்கோ உட்படுத்த மாட்டேன்.
3. வழக்கமான குடும்ப மற்றும் சமூக விழாக்கள் தவிர மற்ற இடங்களில் மாணவர்களின் முன்னிலையில் தொழில் நெறியிலோ, தனிப்பட்ட முறையிலோ, புகையிலைப் பொருட்களைப் பயன்படுத்துவது, புகைபிடிப்பது, மது மற்றும் சட்ட விரோதமான போதைப்பொருள்களை வைத்திருப்பது அல்லது அவற்றின் பாதிப்புக்கு ஆளாகியிருப்பது ஆகியவற்றைச் செய்ய மாட்டேன்.
4. மாணவர்களின் பெற்றோருக்கோ, பாதுகாவலருக்கோ, பிரிவு நிர்வாகிக்கோ தெரியாமல் அந்தரங்கமானதும் பெரிய அளவிலானதுமான பரிசுப்பொருள்களை மாணவர்களிடம் இருந்து பெறவும் மாட்டேன், தனிப்பட்ட முறையில் பரிசுகளை அவர்களுக்குத் தரவும் மாட்டேன்.
5. மாணவர்களுடன் எனக்கு இருக்கும் தொழில் முறையிலான தொடர்புக்கு வெளியே சமூக வலைத்தளங்களின் மூலம், அவர்களுடன் தனிப்பட்ட வகையில் தொடர்பு வைத்திருக்க மாட்டேன்.

ஏ ஐ எஸ் சி யின் சார்பாகப் பணியாற்றுவதால் எனக்குக் குற்றப் பின்னணி உள்ளதா என்று சரிபார்க்கப் படும் என்பதை அறிவேன். மாணவர் பாதுகாப்பு உடன்படிக்கையை நான் படித்துள்ளேன் என்பதையும், இதில் உள்ளவற்றைப் பின்பற்றுவேன் என்பதையும் என் கையொப்பத்தின் மூலம் உறுதி செய்கிறேன். இந்த மாணவர் பாதுகாப்பு உடன்படிக்கைக்கு பொருத்தமில்லாத செயலைச் செய்தாலும், அல்லது இந்த உடன்படிக்கை வலியுறுத்தும் செயல்களைச் செய்யாமல் விட்டாலும் ஏ ஐ எஸ் எரியிலிருந்து நீக்கப்படுவது வரையான ஒழுங்கு நடவடிக்கைகள் என் மேல் எடுக்கப்படும் என்பதைப் புரிந்து கொண்டேன்.

பெயர்:

தேதி/ கையொப்பம்:

Addendum D: Student Protection Reporting Form (Reporter)
(Submit to an AISC counselor or principal or school psychologist)

Reporter

Name: _____

Position at AISC: _____

Alleged Victim/Student

Name: _____ Grade: _____

☐ Male ☐ Female Birthdate (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Information concerning Individuals who might have abused or neglected the child or who might be involved the situation

Alleged Perpetrator: _____

Relationship to Victim: _____

Occupation/Job Title: _____

Other pertinent information _____

Information Giving Rise to Reasonable Suspicion or Concern

Include date, time, and location of incident, any physical evidence such as letters/taped phone conversations and/or direct quotes from victim/ perpetrator (use back of form for additional information).

Signature of Reporter: _____

Date of Report (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Notes:

[illegible]

Notes:

[illegible]

Notes:

[illegible]



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