



ICS  **ADDIS ABABA**
International Community School
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CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK

(Adapted from the Assoc. of Int'l Schools in Africa
Child Protection Handbook, May 2014)

Introduction:

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world and are violations of a child's human rights that create obstacles to their academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children and need to insure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop. Educators have the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time and are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. ICS seeks to be a safe haven for all students and as such has adopted the following comprehensive child protection program, which it will communicate annually to all staff, parents and new applicants. The child protection program defines the various forms of child abuse and outlines the school's requirements for:

- mandated reporters and procedures for reporting,
- screening and selecting staff, faculty, and volunteers,
- maintaining a child protection team,
- training and education about child sexual abuse prevention for staff and students,
- a code of conduct that guides interactions between adults and children,
- follow-up care and service plans for families in need.

Mandated Reporters and Procedures for Reporting

In conjunction with Ethiopian laws, ICS maintains that all school employees are mandated reporters of child abuse, neglect and/or harassment. If any employee of ICS has reasonable cause to suspect that a student is being mistreated in any way, he/she is to report the suspicion to a school counselor or administrator immediately. Failure to report may result in the termination of the employment contract and/or legal accountability. Reporting and follow-up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the guidelines in this handbook. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, ICS will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority. Cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported by the school to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Ethiopia, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

The following is child protection protocol at ICS:

- All employees are mandated reporters of child abuse, neglect and/or harassment
- Employees are to immediately report any suspicions to a school counselor or administrator
- The school counselor or administrator immediately informs the Head of School
- School counselor or administrator investigates by talking to the pertinent parties: the student, the student's teacher, the parents, etc.
- If applicable and in the best interest of the child, parents will be notified and invited to a meeting to discuss the concerns determined by the school
- All findings are systematically recorded by the counselor or administrator and placed in the child's cumulative file for documentation of the suspected incident
- If suspicion is substantial and/or the child seems to be at risk of further abuse, the counselor or administrator will compile an official report that will be legally translated into Amharic
- The report will be officially filed with the local branch of the Bureau of Women's, Children and

Youth Affairs and they will determine next steps according to Ethiopian law

- If the suspected perpetrator is the parent, or if the parents do not act in the best interest of protecting their child, the school maintains the right to contact the parents' employer, the family's embassy(s) and/or legal authorities, mandate professional counseling and/or revoke enrollment of their student(s) at ICS
- If the suspected perpetrator is a school employee and their continued employment is determined to put children at further risk, the school maintains the right to contact legal authorities and /or the employee's embassy, mandate professional counseling and/or terminate the employment contract at ICS
- Follow-up services will be provided by the school counselor as needed

Screening and Selecting Staff, Faculty, and Volunteers:

At ICS, we are committed to making sure that our staff, faculty and outside service providers (ASA, tutoring, music lessons, etc.) have been properly and rigorously screened before working with children. ICS is also committed to ensuring that all outside contracted workers have provided documentation of background checks and screenings.

ICS requires the following screening and criminal background checks from all faculty, staff, contractors, vendors and service providers:

- Written application/statement of suitability
- Personal interview
- Credential check
- Reference checks
- Criminal history background check

All staff members are required to take an online training on child protection as part of the orientation process during which there will also be a review of this handbook. A similar training will be conducted with the local staff in Amharic as well.

Child Protection Team

The purpose of the child protection team is to ensure that the child protection guidelines are being implemented and to monitor and review the effectiveness of the program. The team ensures that the child protection curriculum is taught and assessed annually. The team will also ensure professional development and training for all staff and volunteers and parents. Most importantly, the team will serve as a resource group in working with cases requiring child protection (ie. assist in reporting suspected cases of abuse and/or neglect, follow-up disclosures to the multi-disciplinary team or appropriate authorities).

The Child Protection Team at ICS consists of:

- School Psychologist
- Counselor
- Nurse
- Teacher representative from each division
- Administrator
- Office of Teaching and Learning (implement and schedule curriculum)

The counselors, in partnership with the child protection team have developed the curriculum for school-wide personal social education programs to include specific child protection content. This curriculum will define abuse, neglect and harassment, provide prevention and reporting strategies, and instill in our students an overall understanding that no child deserves to be abused, neglected nor harassed. Purposeful instruction in child protection will help to create a school environment in which students feel safe and protected, and whereby students are encouraged and empowered to report abuse, neglect or harassment to a trusted adult, knowing they will receive comprehensive support. The curriculum is division specific and will be taught at the appropriate age level and developmental level of the students.

Code of Conduct that Guides Interactions between Adults and Children:

ICS requires that all staff, faculty, volunteers and anyone working with children at ICS demonstrate responsibility in maintaining appropriate boundaries and professionalism at all times. All personnel are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct.

- Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child. This includes not transporting youngsters alone in your car. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a space out of earshot, but within sight of others for your conference.
- The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adult volunteers should preserve their own privacy in these situations also.
- Avoid touching areas that are normally covered by swimming suits; breasts, buttocks, and groin. When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
- Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behavior for an adult staff member or volunteer.
- When volunteering to supervise overnight activities, adults should not share sleeping quarters with children other than their own.
- Revealing personal information about one's sex life by an adult volunteer or staff member is never appropriate.
- Do not use corporal punishment in any form

It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behavior, the adult must reject the overture.

Follow-up Care and Services:

Beyond our legal obligation to report suspected child abuse, neglect and/or harassment, we believe we have a moral and ethical obligation to assist our families with follow-up care and services that will enable them to move forward in a healthy manner. Therefore, we offer the following post-traumatic intervention strategies and work closely with families to develop an appropriate plan of action. Because each experience of abuse, neglect or harassment is unique, so are the intervention strategies applied. Below you will find the types of support we are able to provide to our students and families in need.

We provide:

- Preliminary counseling and guidance in a confidential and supportive environment
- Referrals to licensed counselors, therapists or mental health professionals for continued individual or family therapy outside the school setting
- Weekly check-ins with student/parents to monitor the intervention plan, share feedback on progress, and revise strategies as needed
- Supportive resources such as websites, articles, books, support blogs, etc

Definitions of Child Abuse:

The World Health Organization provides the following definition:

Child maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation.

http://www.who.int/topics/child_abuse/en/

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting usually by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger (most child abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows, respects or trusts). Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

The following information is excerpted from the *AISA Child Protection Handbook (3rd Edition)*:

To increase the AISA community's awareness, this handbook focuses on four main categories of abuse and provides basic information about the physical and behavioral signs associated with each type.

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

Signs of physical abuse

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

- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and compliant
- Chronic running away

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

Signs of emotional abuse

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

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

Signs of sexual abuse

- Pain or irritation to the genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Difficulty with urination
- Infection, bleeding
- STDs
- Fear of people or places

- Aggression
- Regressive behaviors, bed-wetting or stranger anxiety
- Excessive masturbation
- Sexually provocative
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
- Suffering from what seem physical ailments that can't be explained medically
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new “secret” friendship with an adult or young person
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities
- Age inappropriate sexualized behavior or language

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

Some indicators of neglect

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

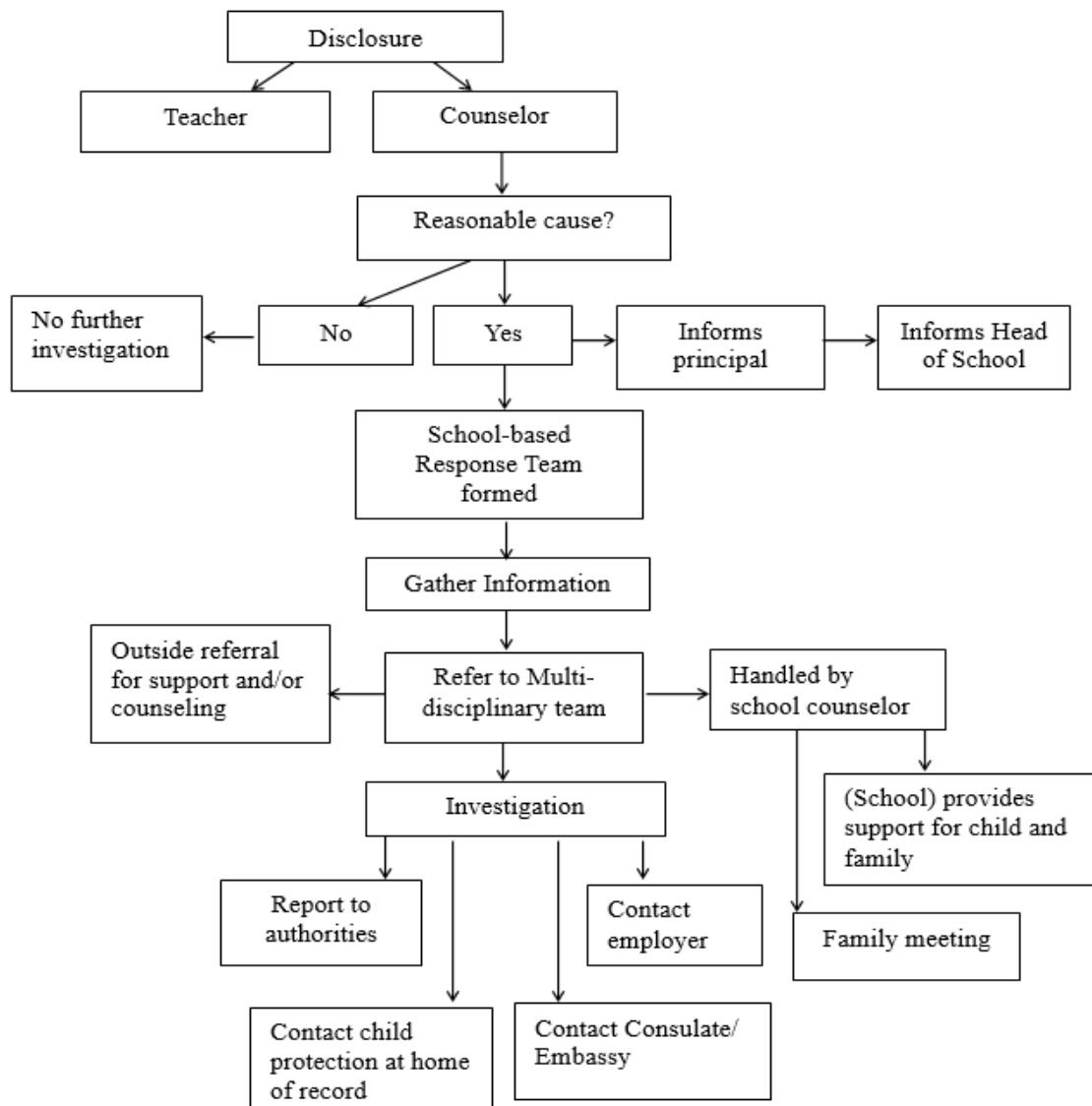
Long-term impact of unmitigated child abuse

The impact of child abuse can persist for a lifetime after the abuse has been committed. Some victims of abuse are resilient and thus manage to function and survive. Much research has established the relationship between long-term child abuse and lifetime health and well being, especially if the children do not get appropriate support to help them cope with the trauma. The most important point to consider is that children often are exposed to multiple forms of abuse and suffer a myriad of symptoms. Furthermore, all forms of abuse have the potential for long-term impact on the victims, and can affect

the victim's ability to function as a human being. Abuse challenges the self-value, self-esteem, and sense of worth of its victims, rendering them hopeless, helpless and unable to live a complete life.

Long-term impact of child abuse

- Poor educational achievement
- Inability to complete responsibilities
- Inability to live according to plan/ability
- Inability to care for self
- Inability to coexist, cooperate or work with others
- Lack of self-confidence, prone to addiction
- Inability to express love / or accept love
- Inability to lead family, constant health problem
- Prone to mental health problems
- Low self-esteem, depression and anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Attachment difficulties
- Eating disorders
- Poor peer relations, self-injurious behavior (e.g., suicide attempts)



I, _____, agree to follow the guidelines in the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Handbook as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in ICS 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.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public and non-sexual.
- Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of ICS and with the ICS policy to report suspected child abuse.
- 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 with children, 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.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to children or youth 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.
- 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 ICS, I am subject to a criminal history background check. My signature confirms that I have read the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Handbook I agree to follow these standards and I understand that any action inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Handbook or failure to take action mandated therein may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from ICS

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Received in Office: _____