

Child Protection Policy¹

Philosophical Statement

We believe that students at ISB, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, grow in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding (*adapted from UN Convention of the Rights of the Child*). Whilst it is not possible to fully protect all students, ISB has policies and procedures in place to respond to concerns of 'physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s)' or any other person who comes into contact with the child. (*Article 19, UN Convention of the Rights of the Child*)

In line with the school's Mission and Philosophy, ISB is committed to ensuring that all children in our care are afforded a safe and secure environment that nurtures academic, social and emotional growth. To this end, ISB views this commitment as a 'partnership' (ISB Mission and Philosophy), involving all members of ISB community.

As a school located in Switzerland, we comply with Swiss Federal and Cantonal laws pertaining to child protection.

¹ It is understood that practice will inform future developments and amendments of this policy document.

Guiding Principles

ISB is guided by a duty and responsibility to 'protect and safeguard the interests of all children'. Any action around child protection is founded on agreed and documented procedures, collaboration with all relevant institutions/legal authorities and informed and confident staff, prepared to respond to child protection situations.

This policy document provides the foundation for all work associated with child protection at ISB. The procedures section provides general guidelines for all members of ISB community to ensure our students' safety and wellbeing is a priority at all times.

ISB seeks to be a safe environment for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, ISB will:

- Ensure this policy is available to all parents and applicant families,
- Provide education for students about their rights, how to keep themselves safe, and what to do if they are in danger,
- Provide guidelines and/or training for all adult ISB community members in identifying and acting on child protection related issues,
- Protect ISB employees who come forward and report on any suspicious allegation,
- Review periodically the policy for effectiveness and development arising from its practice,
- Make every effort to apply hiring practices that are in line with the ISB Child Protection Policy.

ISB is committed to ensuring that students at our school will be able to talk freely to adult members of our community if they have concerns related to themselves or others. Everyone who comes into contact with students and their families has a role to play in safeguarding students.

Adults in the ISB community (includes ISB staff and families/parent(s)/guardian(s)), having the opportunity to observe and interact with students, within or beyond the school grounds, have a professional and/or ethical obligation to:

- Respond to students who are in need of support and protection,
- Report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever there is reasonable cause to believe, even if certainty has not been established or proven, that a child has suffered, or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect.

Any disclosure, including potential reports against an adult member of the ISB community, will be taken seriously and follows internal procedures. At all times, the safety of the student will be kept at the highest priority whilst maintaining the reputation and integrity of the adult concerned.

Confidentiality

At all stages in the process, all parties will treat all information as STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will not discuss it with any other person.

Documentation

It is the duty and responsibility of those involved and ultimately the principal to document (electronic and/or paper, as required) the case, ensuring the information is accessible when required and protected from non-authorised access and/or damage. The campus principal keeps an independent secure file of CP cases arising in the school which is checked against every new CP case that comes up.

Applicable Law

For any disputes arising from the application of this policy, ISB will be governed by Swiss law.

Review

ISB Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be reviewed and/or amended according to developments in June 2016 and every subsequent year in June, unless earlier revisions are deemed necessary.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank all schools that shared their Child Protection Policies and, in particular, Inter-Community School Zurich, Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA), International School of Moscow and International Community School London, whose policies informed the content and approach of ISB's Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection Procedures

Stage 1: Obligation to disclose

If a staff member suspects or receives information pertaining to an incident of child abuse or neglect, or a pattern of behaviour that indicates that a child may be subject to abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to discuss and/or report it within ISB. The campus principal must be informed if a case is being discussed.

Based on the case, parent(s) and/or legal guardian involvement will be considered in the next stage. The individual who initially disclosed the case will be informed that case has been followed up.

Stage 2: Assessment

The ISB team involved in the further evaluation of the case may include one or more of the following ISB staff members: campus principal, counsellor, Director, ISB Cantonal Liaison Officer², teacher(s), nurse. Assessment progress may require consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or support services of the place of residency of the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s).

The outcome of this stage may include one or more of the following as identified by the team:

- Collaboration with family, parent(s) and/or relevant support services
- Official report to local authorities
- Should parent(s)/guardian(s) not follow up on agreed steps or refuse(s) to cooperate, official report to local authorities

If a decision to report to local authorities (e.g. Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutzbehörden, KESB) is reached, ISB follows the KESB guidelines or any other child endangerment authority, according to the student's place of residency.

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