Visible Leadership in Child Protection

Head-Talk

AAIE 2019
We have an urgent situation at our school involving an allegation of abuse against a teacher.

School Director, Middle East
In responding to a difficult and troubling child safeguarding case, I have found it very hard to know what to do in order to protect the children involved from further harm.

Head of School, Europe
Our School Board took the decision this evening not to go ahead with the risk assessment. I am deeply concerned by this ruling and the fact that words like reputation and liability were used before considering the needs of our students. This goes against everything I believe.

Head of School, Asia
There is no book on how to handle a situation like this.

Chairman, School Board, North America
As a thirteen-year-old girl I was groped by both a popular teacher and coach. I tried to tell another teacher, one also admired by many of us, about the first episode; it was laughed off. After that, I never told anyone anything.

Former Student, North America
I would like to stress [...] the overwhelming importance of two things for organisations in protecting children - a culture of openness, including a willingness to recognise and accept that abuse could happen in any organisation and a robust structure to support the effective reporting and handling of concerns about behaviour.

Moira Gibb, 2016
Aligned with the recommendations of the International Task Force on Child Protection, we hold ourselves to a high standard of effective practices with specific attention to child protection.
Why are international school communities vulnerable?

My Story
Why are international school communities vulnerable?

**International mobility**

Trans-national sex offenders jump from country to country to abuse children... mobility patterns are high for international teachers due to contractual employment.

**Lack of knowledge – different countries/different laws**

Many international school leaders don’t know the local laws and don’t access local law enforcement.
Barriers to Identifying Abuse

What do you see as barriers to identifying and responding to possible child sexual abuse and exploitation at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural norms that prevent parents from discussing sexual abuse/exploitation</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural norms that prevent students from reporting personal information</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate community resources for victims and families</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of / inadequate parent training</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear that the police investigation will be ineffective</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of / inadequate training</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear that intervention will do more harm than good</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Has the school created a definition of child protection which is fully understood by board members, owners, school leaders, staff, students, parents and volunteers?

Do the school’s culture and values support and encourage effective practices?
The school has developed structured procedures for reporting suspected or disclosed maltreatment or abuse, including disclosure of abuse that may have taken place in the past, and adopts a formal policy identifying actions to be taken, including informing appropriate authorities.
Managing allegations of abuse against educators and other adults

International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP)
All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse.

Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.

All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school.

All actions on child protection are taken with consideration for the best interests of the child, which are paramount.
Guiding Principles

- A duty to children
- A duty to the alleged perpetrator
- A duty to the law and mandatory reporting obligations
Is this person suitable to work with children?

This question must be considered even where a criminal investigation does not proceed.
Impacts and Obligations

Reporting obligations when an individual is dismissed for child protection reasons

Providing references for the alleged perpetrator

Reinstating and managing the reintegration of an alleged perpetrator