



**CHILD PROTECTION  
HANDBOOK  
For Parents**

Dear Parents,

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Violations of a child's human rights are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical and emotional development. Seoul International School's Child Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <sup>1</sup> of which South Korea is a signatory. The following two articles are of the utmost importance:

**Article 19 □ Protection from abuse and neglect**

*The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.*

**Article 34 □ Sexual exploitation**

*The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.*

As an international school, Seoul International School fully recognizes its responsibility and unique position as it pertains to child protection while respecting the laws and authorities of Korea. We also realize how important both the family and the community are in building the safest environment for the students. As we continue to work together, the child's best interest will always be the focus of our efforts. For this reason, SIS has adopted the Child Protection Policy (CPP) outlined in this document.

Seoul International School's Child Protection Policy includes the following:

1. Parent information/materials offered to explain and clarify the CPP.
2. Extensive background checks for all staff and faculty prior to hiring.
3. Training for faculty and staff to recognize signs of suspected abuse and to follow appropriate protocol for reporting.
4. SIS is mandated <sup>2</sup> by Korean law to report suspected cases of child abuse to the National Child Protection Agency (NCPA) in Seoul.

By enrolling your child at SIS, you have entrusted us with his/her safety, a responsibility we do not take lightly. We hope to work in partnership with you to ensure that together we will provide a school climate where students feel confident, safe and secure. Thank you for supporting our efforts and please feel free to contact the school counselor, division principal or the Head of School if you have any questions or concerns about the SIS Child Protection Handbook.

## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

### DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Child abuse is a complex set of behaviors that are non-accidental and result in far-reaching negative effects. Definitions and possible indicators of different forms of child abuse are given below:

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Physical abuse of children includes any nonaccidental physical injury caused by the child's caretaker. It may include injuries sustained from burning, beating, kicking, punching, and so on. While the injury is not an accident, neither is it necessarily the intent of the child's caretaker to injure the child. Physical abuse may result from extreme discipline or from a punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or condition. Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

### ***POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE***

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Injuries reflecting the shape of the article used (an electric cord, belt, buckle, hand, etc)
- Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
- Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
- Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
- Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso
- Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures
- Avoiding adult contact
- Showing aggressive and/or intimidating behavior
- Fearing parents
- Fearing going home
- The child described as "accident prone"

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Emotional maltreatment includes blaming, belittling, or rejecting a child; constantly treating siblings unequally; and a persistent lack of concern by the caretaker for the child's welfare. While emotional maltreatment most often is observed through behavior, it is possible for children to internalize it so sufficiently as to cause developmental lags, psychosomatic symptoms, and other visible effects, such as speech disorders. A pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. (This could include ignoring, rejecting, isolating, exploiting, verbally assaulting, and neglecting.)

### ***POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE***

- Behavioral problems (antisocial, destructive behaviors)
- Sucking or biting a particular object constantly
- Mental neurogenic reaction (hysteria, pressure, fear)
- Extreme behavior, hyperactivity, suicidal behavior
- Overreacting to making mistakes
- Fearing contact with parents
- Sudden change in observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's or vulnerable mental or psychological ability to function

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Childhood and adolescent sexual abuse have been associated with a wide variety of adverse mental and physical health outcomes. The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws of society. In addition, teens may also experience sexual harassment or other unwanted behaviors through technology and online interactions.

### ***POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE***

- Sexual knowledge, behavior or use of language not appropriate to the age level
- Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
- Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anus areas
- Unhealthy eating patterns, like a loss of appetite or excessive eating
- Signs of physical abuse, such as bruises
- Anxiety or worry
- Falling grades
- Changes in self-care, such as paying less attention to hygiene, appearance, or fashion than they usually do
- Self-harming behavior
- Expressing thoughts about suicide or suicide behavior
- Drinking or drug use

**NEGLECT:** Failure of a parent or guardian of the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.

## ***POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT***

- The child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in the child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- The child does not want to go home
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency
- Unhealthy due to not getting vaccination/medical treatment
- Wearing clothes out of season
- Begging for food or stealing
- Coming to school early and going home late
- Constantly feeling tired and insecure
- Sleeping in class
- Frequent absences

## **GUARDIANSHIP**

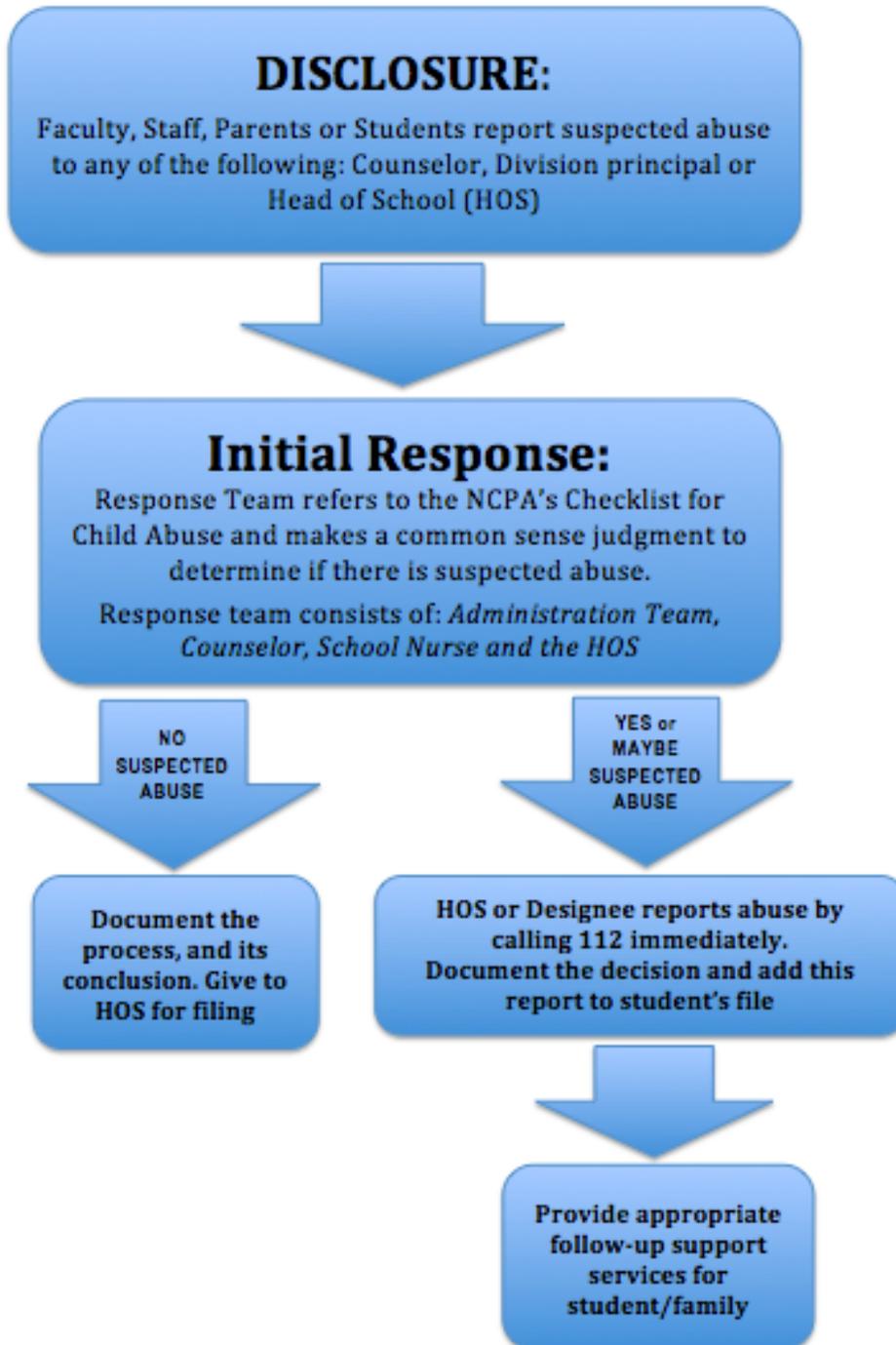
Seoul International School mandates that each student must live with at least one of his/her parents or legal guardians recognized by the school. All students should be provided with an ongoing and stable relationship and a family environment that is supportive of the student's education at SIS.

Parents who are temporarily unable to fulfill SIS' guardianship criteria must inform the level principal's office and will be supported by the school to develop suitable alternative arrangements for the student in question. Failure to inform the level office of a change in guardianship may result in the student's ongoing enrollment being reviewed by SIS.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE**

If there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member or any member of the community to report their suspicion to the counselor, sectional administrator, or the Head of School. **The National Child Protection Agency considers all school personnel mandated reporters.**

**SIS Child Protection Flowchart:**



## **DUTY OF CARE**

A school community must ensure that all children in its care are provided a safe and secure the environment in which to grow and develop intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and psychologically. School employees, as well as school community members, have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help, report to a principal/counselor, and to take action to help ensure the child's safety and well-being.

Seoul International School is committed to the duty of care for the students that the organization is entrusted with. To ensure the safety of every student, all SIS Personnel shall:

- undergo extensive criminal and background checks prior to working with students at SIS
- receive annual training to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect,
- conduct themselves with the highest degree of professionalism, integrity, and ethics,
- assure the physical and emotional safety of all students,
- foster appropriate and healthy relationships with students,
- report any suspected cases of abuse,
- maintain confidentiality regarding all private and sensitive matters as they arise, and
- comply with and act in accordance with Korean Laws as well as School's Policies and Administrative Regulations.

## **WHAT DOES A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY MEAN FOR THE SIS COMMUNITY?**

SIS is defining a standard for the treatment of all students in the community – that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

All children have legal and moral rights to their individuality, that when protected, will develop into the ability to meet the needs of the family, community, and society as a whole. SIS' Child Protection Policy encompasses all cultures and international law. If given reasonable cause to believe that a student's rights have been violated, SIS will use all available resources to protect those rights.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. The Convention establishes in international law that States Parties must ensure that all children—without discrimination in any form—benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner. (from UNICEF resources)

### **2 Mandated Reporting**

The legal requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. Failure to follow protocol could result in fines and/or criminal charges.

### **3 Confidentiality**

The non-disclosure of information except to another authorized person.

### **Sources:**

- Actual Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.crin.org/en/home/rights/convention>
- Children’s Rights Alliance Summary of the UN Rights Convention of the Child : [https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/information\\_sheets/files/SummaryUNCRC.pdf](https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/information_sheets/files/SummaryUNCRC.pdf)
- National Child Protection Agency: <http://korea1391.go.kr/new/page/eng/welcoming.php>

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