



Inspire Achieve

Renaissance

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SAIGON

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND HANDBOOK

*Our mission is to inspire excellence in international education
so that our students achieve lifelong success, happiness and respect for all.*

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From the Head of School

Dear Member of the Renaissance Community,

At Renaissance the safety of your child/ren is paramount. When students feel safe, happy and supported they learn, thrive and develop the confidence and inner strength needed to succeed in a global world. We understand that a safe environment helps to support and promote not only academic success but, the development of citizens with a strong and focussed social, moral, cultural and spiritual compass.

In keeping with our core values the school follows a Child Protection Policy aimed at guiding our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. By enrolling your child at Renaissance you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the Board.

The school has adopted protocols which are extended and incorporated into daily practice, curriculum and activities with the following aims:

- Developing a safe and healthy school environment;
- Providing age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs, and rights;
- Providing parent materials and information sessions to help better understand school programs and policy;
- Train, on an annual basis, school employees and contracted staff to recognise and report issues of abuse and neglect.

At Renaissance we know that we can work together to ensure that our students are safe and knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities. I thank you for your support and invite you to contact our School Counsellor, or our Child Protection Officer, if you have any questions related to Child Protection and school policies in support of it.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gittins', written in a cursive style.

Peter Gittins
Head of School

Renaissance International School Policy Statement

~Child Abuse and Protection~

Policy Statement

Renaissance International School takes very seriously its role in providing responsive, preventive and supportive service to deal with protection issues and concerns before these surface and as a proactive strategy for health and well-being for all our students. Our aim is to provide a safe and healthy school environment which allows and promotes a positive and enriching school experience that nurtures students in preparation for becoming global citizens. Whilst noting the above, in addition to being responsive in the preventive sense we must also be prepared to respond in a planned manner and attend to the range of protection issues including abuse in whatever form it may take.

The above Policy Statement is inclusive of the Renaissance **Child Abuse and Protection Handbook** which includes:

- ✓ the definitions which inform our understanding of what constitutes the maltreatment of a child including definitions of abuse: sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, bullying (cyber-bullying),
- ✓ the protection procedures/ investigative and assessment elements for dealing with disclosure, and:
- ✓ the considerations we will exercise in the implementation of this policy including on-line safety, recognition of harm, children with special educational needs and disabilities, allegation against staff members, children who go missing from education, adult guardianship and supervision and the local context: Vietnam.

“CHILDREN ARE GIFTS”

We do not own our children nor do we hold dominion over them.

Rather, we are blessed with the gift of opportunity to extend our love, kindness, caring and sharing with, to, and for our children. In this way we exercise the responsibility and obligations we all carry as the Human Family.

How we understand and live this obligation and responsibility will be reflected in our children and the shape and form of our future on this fragile and beautiful planet.

~Cree Teaching (Canada)

CHILD PROTECTION

OUR FOCUS

At Renaissance International School Saigon (Renaissance) we work to deal with child welfare concerns before they become child protection issues. As child abuse is a violation of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their social, emotional, cultural and spiritual development, we always abide by the laws of Vietnam and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Research supports the effectiveness of prevention as a primary means of ensuring the safety and security of children, and we are committed to prevention through a variety of means. However, there are circumstances where means of prevention are not sufficient and the commission of abuse and neglect takes place. In these circumstances, the school and families will collaborate with local agencies and local authorities for the best solution.

Teachers are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, they have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to insure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

All staff (both teaching and non-teaching) employed at Renaissance must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with administrative regulations respective to this policy and found in this Handbook.

Renaissance seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, we will share this policy to all prospective students and families, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide annual training for all staff, will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children, and will review this policy annually for compliance and effectiveness. In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender the school will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process and in compliance with the laws, keeping the safety of the child as its highest priority.

UNDERSTANDING OF ABUSE AND CHILD PROTECTION

Abuse is complex and can be understood differently across various cultures according to their child-rearing behaviours, gender and role responsibilities, and expectations.

At Renaissance 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, typically either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. The school follows the determination that research

guides much of the definitions and that are based in an understanding on the impact of certain behaviours.

All members of staff need to be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

The Definition of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender based violence/ sexual assault, sexting and initiation type abuse. Staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse, such events are dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy ([R:\POLICIES\4.8. Positive Behaviour Policy.doc](#))

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Victims of peer abuse will be supported as a priority at pastoral level. All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues-some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

~ Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse ~

- ✓ Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body;
- ✓ Bruises of different ages (various colours);
- ✓ Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line, unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of mistreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Due to factors such as societal differences and cultural practices in the way that we raise boys and girls, many times the warning signs of emotional abuse will be gender specific.

Boys may tend toward more:

- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Temper Tantrum
- ✓ Fighting with peers/sibs
- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Dis-obedience/ defiance.
- ✓ Frustration
- ✓ Lying/cheating
- ✓ Destructive
- ✓ Impulsive/lacks self-control
- ✓ Argumentative
- ✓ Teases others excessively
- ✓ Worries excessively
- ✓ Withdrawn

Girls may tend toward more:

- ✓ Withdrawn
- ✓ Passive
- ✓ Approval seeking
- ✓ Compliant
- ✓ Easily frustrated
- ✓ Infinitely patient
- ✓ Clingy with adults
- ✓ Low self-confidence
- ✓ Overly dependant
- ✓ Stubborn
- ✓ Teases others excessively
- ✓ Worries excessively
- ✓ Somatic complaints (body aches, illnesses)

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming children in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Sexual exploitation can also occur where children are exploited for power, money or status. Consent can never be given by a child in actions of sexual exploitation even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may happen online.

~ Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse ~

- ✓ Sexual knowledge, behaviour, or use of language not appropriate to age level;
- ✓ Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns;
- ✓ Venereal disease in a child of any age;
- ✓ Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding in the oral, genital, or anal area;
- ✓ Difficulty in walking or sitting;
- ✓ Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathroom;
- ✓ Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint;
- ✓ Not wanting to be alone with an individual;
- ✓ Pregnancy, especially at a young age;
- ✓ Extremely protective parenting.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve the parent or care giver failing to:

- ✓ Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- ✓ Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ✓ Ensure adequate supervision;
- ✓ Ensure access to appropriate supervision. This may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The details in this section are not exhaustive.

~ Possible Indicators of Neglect ~

- ✓ A student is unwashed or hungry;
- ✓ Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance;
- ✓ Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school;
- ✓ A student does not want to go home;
- ✓ Both parents or legal guardians are absent from HCMC for any period of 24 hours or greater, without appropriate provision made for child's care, and a temporary guardian named;
- ✓ Parents cannot be reached in the case of emergency.

Bullying ([R:\POLICIES\4.1. Anti-Bullying and Anti-Discrimination Policy.docx](#))

Bullying is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another student, or a series of a single act directed toward several students in a school setting or a place of learning, which results in physical or mental abuse, harassment, intimidation or humiliation. Such acts may consist of anyone or more of the following:

- ✓ Treats to inflict a wrong upon the person, honour, or property of the person or on his family;
- ✓ Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a person in his or her daily activities, with unwanted and obsessive attention;
- ✓ Taking of property;
- ✓ Public humiliation, or public and malicious imputation of a crime or of a vice or defect, whether real or imaginary or any act, omission, condition, status, or circumstance tending to cause dishonour, discredit or expose a person to contempt;
- ✓ Deliberate destruction or defacement or damage of a child's property;
- ✓ Physical violence committed upon the student which may or may not result to harm or injury, with or without the aid of weapon. Such violence may be in the form of mauling, heating, punching, kicking, throwing things at the student, pinching, spanking, or other similar acts;
- ✓ Demanding or requiring monetary favours, or exacting money or property, from a student;
- ✓ Restraining the liberty and freedom of a student.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber bullying is any conduct defined in the preceding paragraph, as resulting in harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through electronic means or other technology, such as, but not limited to texting, e-mail, instant messaging, chatting, internet, social networking websites or other platforms or formats.

“Other acts of abuse by a student or learner”- refers to other serious acts of abuse committed by a student, student or learner upon another student, student or learner of the same school, not falling under the definition of “bullying” in the preceding provisions, including but not limited to acts of a physical, sexual or psychological nature.

“Corporal punishment – refers to a kind of punishment or penalty impose for an allege or actual offense, which is carried out or inflicted, for the purpose of discipline, training or control, by a

teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority or responsibility for punishment or discipline, it includes physical, humiliating or degrading punishment.

On-line Safety

Statutory guidance is that online safety needs to be given its own sub-heading to highlight its importance as schools increasingly work online it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

Appropriate monitoring systems should be in place to ensure content being viewed is appropriate. We will ensure that over blocking and other rules do not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can access and be taught. Renaissance will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education and/or through sex and relationship education.

WHAT FACTORS INFORM OUR PROTECTION CONCERNS AND ACTIONS?

Recognition of Harm – Safeguarding

The harm or possible harm of a child may come to your attention in a number of possible ways:

- ✓ Information given by the child friends, family member, a close associate or an unrelated child or adult;
- ✓ The child's behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve 'acting out' harmful situations in play;
- ✓ An injury which arouses suspicion because:
 - It does not make sense when compared with the explanation;
 - The explanations differ depending on who is giving them, e.g. differing explanations from the child and the parent;
 - The student appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury;
 - Suspicion being raised when a number of factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/ her peers;
 - Contact with individuals who pose a 'risk to children'. This can be someone who has been convicted of an offense or someone who has been identified as a possible risk.

Bullying: This can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- ✓ Physical: For example, hitting, kicking and theft;
- ✓ Verbal: For example, racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling;

- ✓ Emotional: For example, isolating an individual from activities and acceptance of their peer group. The damage inflicted by bullying, including cyberbullying, can frequently be underestimated. Bullying can be through the use of electronic communication, e.g. texts or social networking sites. Bullying can also cause considerable distress, to the extent that it can affect health and development and may also lead to the risk of significant or extreme harm.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- ✓ Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- ✓ Children with SEN and disabilities can be dis-proportionally impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs;
- ✓ Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Prolonged Student Absence (<R:\POLICIES\3.8. Home - School Communication Policy.docx>)

If a student is missing from school for a prolonged period of time, this needs to be reported to relevant personnel, including the Head of School (HoS) by administrative staff and class teachers/ tutors. Any changes of address or school must be recorded on the internal information system.

Adult Guardianship and Supervision (<R:\POLICIES\3.8. Home - School Communication Policy.docx>)

Renaissance Policy in relation to neglect recognizes the failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time.

Note:

The school requires one parent be a full-time resident of HCMC (Saigon). Should parents/guardians leave the country for any reason, then the responsibility for informing the school in writing of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. (This information is expected to be provided prior to parents/ guardians leaving the country.)

The Local Context: Vietnam

Although there is little infrastructure in Vietnam to deal with Child Protection issues there is a growing awareness at the government level that this needs to be addressed. Evidenced cases of abuse can be referred to the Vietnamese police; Vietnamese Law will apply in these cases. (see ATTACHMENT 3) for description of Vietnam infrastructure dealing with Abuse).

Direct intervention by the Head of School, Counsellor and parents **is a primary option that will be considered before** referral to the authorities.

Where the Head of School considers that a referral to the Vietnamese authorities may be required, there are factors which will be broadly considered in our local context before making a final decision and this will only be made after consultation with the Head of School, Counsellor and in answer to the question, “is this a child in need of protection and in consideration to the following:

- ✓ The child is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the intervention of an outside agency
- ✓ The child health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without intervention (ii) Is this a child protection matter? Under UK legislation a child could be a child protection risk if:
- ✓ There is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The Counsellor will be responsible for collecting all relevant evidence so that collective judgments concerning ‘significant harm’ and levels of need can be ascertained.

Allegations Against Staff Members ([R:\POLICIES\5.2. Staff Disciplinary Policy.doc](#))

If any member of staff at the school has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the organisation including but not limited to:

- ✓ Behaving in a way that has harmed, may have harmed, or may harm a child;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offense against, or related to, a child;
- ✓ Behaved/ acted towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/ she is unsuitable to work with children.

The nature of the allegation or concern should be reported to the Head of School immediately. The underlying principle in such cases is that the welfare of the child is paramount. Adults about whom there are concerns should be treated fairly and honestly and should be provided with support.

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed to work with children and young people.

The school has a Disciplinary Policy which outlines the process for administratively handling staff disciplinary matters for dealing with 1) Misconduct, 2) Gross Misconduct and, 3) Criminal Offences. Where there is an allegation of abuse the direction provided in the Disciplinary Policy and under the heading “Gross Misconduct” or “Criminal Offence” may be administered as the means to internally guide the immediate requirements for “Safeguarding” and dealing with the “Potential for Harm”.

***Please note that the Disciplinary Policy is not a procedural document for the investigation of abuse. Procedures for the “Initial Assessment” of an allegation are found in the “Key Persons/ Procedural Flow Chart” and supported by the Section which describes “How Does the Procedural Flow Chart Work” and is found immediately after the Procedural Flow Chart.*

Some Additional Factors Which Inform our Actions

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by the Counsellor with collaboration from the Pastoral Head, such as those involving:

- ✓ Student relationships with peers;
- ✓ Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home;
- ✓ Student-parent relationships;
- ✓ Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.

Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

- ✓ Mental health issues such as severe/ clinical depression, psychosis, dissociation, and suicide ideation;
- ✓ Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect;
- ✓ Sexual abuse and incest.

In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

- ✓ The Consulate of the country of the involved family;
- ✓ The employer sponsoring the involved family;
- ✓ Local law enforcement.

KEY CHILD PROTECTION PERSONNEL

The Child Protection Team

The Child Protection Team (CPT) consists of The Head of School or designate, School Counsellor, Child Protection Officer, Nurse and an outside Consultant-Therapist/Psychologist (as required).

This team is responsible for protection and acts to consider not only the outcome of assessment and investigation but also considers the total ramifications of protection and directs the CRT and the Counsellor accordingly.

The CPT is also responsible for the ongoing monitoring and animation for Child Protection in the school and will oversee policy development, procedural issues, resource allocation, training needs and the overall monitoring for protection in the school.

The Counsellor acts as the main contact and resource for information, guidance and direction to the CPT. The team will meet at regular intervals to monitor and update on Protection in the school and will be convened as necessary when protection issues surface.

Critical Response Team (CRT)

The Critical Response Team is the first response to protection issues in the school. It is comprised of the Counsellor, First Contact Person, Child Protection Officer, Nurse (as required) and other stakeholders as deemed necessary to support assessment and investigation.

The CRT is convened on an “as need basis” and will be empowered by the Head of School to be actively involved in assessment to the extent of their expertise, training and experience. The Counsellor takes the lead role with the CRT and will define and guide the process of assessment.

Head of School (HoS)

The Head of School holds the administrative and final say for decision making on the planned intervention for Child Protection and can assign this role (fully or partially) to a designate to act on his/her behalf.

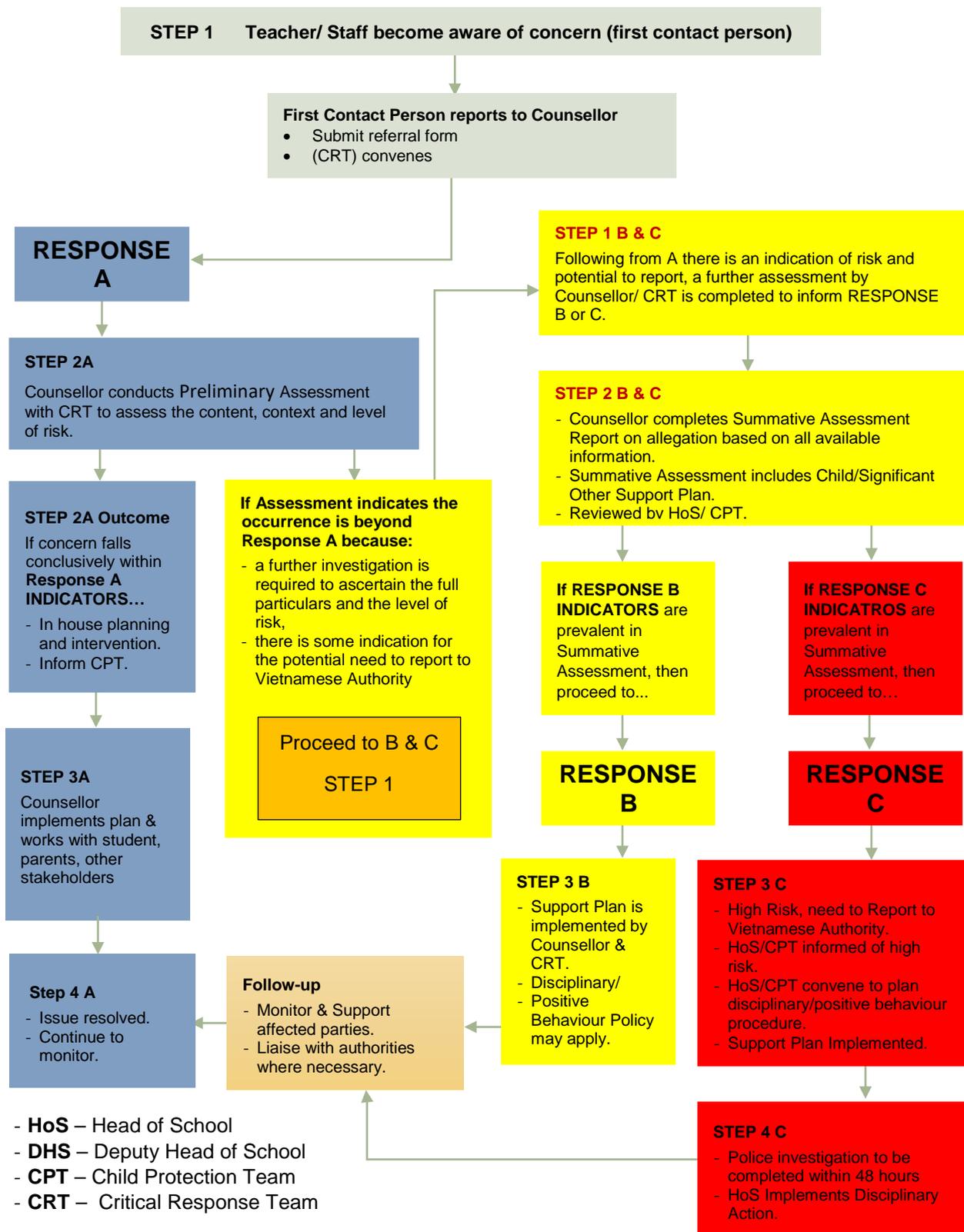
School Counsellor

The School Counsellor is the primary designate for addressing Protection issues and executing any and all initiatives which relate to Renaissance Protection.

The Child Protection Officer (CPO)

The CPO is an integral part of the CRT and a support to the Counsellor where issues emerge.

KEY PERSONS/ PROCEDURAL FLOW CHART



*** WHERE IT IS AN ALLEGATION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER THE RENAISSANCE DISCIPLINARY POLICY WILL BE FOLLOWED.**

*** WHERE IT IS AN ALLEGATION AGAINST A STUDENT THE RENAISSANCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY WILL BE FOLLOWED.**

THE WORKINGS OF THE PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART

There are three (3) decision points to consider in the procedures for a preliminary assessment of an allegation of Abuse.

PROCEDURE A **LEADS TO AN IN-HOUSE DECISION**

With Response A, it may be a question of inappropriate behaviour/practices which require attention but not a full investigation by an external authority (i.e. Police).

A few examples:

- ✓ student to student physical/verbal/emotional altercations,
- ✓ inappropriate parenting practices,
- ✓ bullying/cyber-bullying,
- ✓ inappropriate student/teacher interaction.

Steps for Procedure A

- Step 1** The person who had first contact with the allegation will provide and forward all information (including Referral Form) to the Counsellor following the disclosure flowchart. CRT Active. <R:\POLICIES\2.3 Protection Policy - Teacher Referral Form.pdf>
- Step 2** The School Counsellor conducts assessment with CRT assessing content, context and level of risk. Child Protection Team is informed. If concern falls conclusively within Response A indicators (see Below) in house planning begins. All information and findings will be recorded and kept private within our confidential Child Protection System.
- Step 3** The School Counsellor implements plan and works with child, parents and other stakeholders.

Response A Indicators

- ✓ Inappropriate/ questionable student to student interaction - physical, verbal, emotional, psychological.
- ✓ Inappropriate/ questionable Student to Teacher interaction (physical, verbal, emotional, psychological).
- ✓ Inappropriate parenting practices
- ✓ Bullying/ cyber-bullying (content, context and level/ risk/ type of occurrence)

PROCEDURE B **MAY LEAD TO FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

Response B may evolve out of Procedure A and where there is questions of severity, length/ amount of practice and degree of harm perpetrated. Response B will be followed where there

is clearly a recognition of harm and also includes those instances where some form of abuse, as identified in this handbook, may be at issue and requires further investigation to ascertain.

Steps for Procedure B

- Step 1, B&C** Following form Step 1 B & C, there is a need for further assessment and/or an indication of risk and potential to report.
- Step 2, B & C**
- Counsellor completes summative Assessment based on all available information. Summative Assessment includes Child/Significant other Support Plan. HoS & CPT review.
 - If Response B Indicators are prevalent in Summative Assessment, then **proceed to Response B.**
- Step 3, B**
- Support Plan is implemented by Counsellor/ CRT.
 - **Disciplinary/ Positive Behaviour Policy may apply.**
- Step 4, B** If the Critical Response Team determines that circumstances have resolved acceptably, Child Protection Team and Senior Leadership Team are informed, and a schedule of follow-up and support is developed and implemented by Critical Response Team. Monitor and support affected parties. Liaise with Authorities where necessary.

Response B Indicators

- ✓ Student to student interactions which appear to be intentionally motivated to injure or cause physical, emotional, psychological harm potentially placing the child at risk.
- ✓ The use of inappropriate parenting practices which are used for dealing with child behavior and which are based in negative sanctions, repetitive and which appear to be impacting upon the child's general behavior patterns.
- ✓ More than one instance of Bullying/ Cyber-bullying and which appear to be planned and motivated by an intent to cause harm.
- ✓ Inappropriate/ questionable student/ teacher interactions which appear to be repetitive, based in unnecessary negative sanctions and/ or an inappropriate use of power and which are negatively impacting upon the child's behavior and health and well-being.

The immediate concern for following Response B are those acts which may indicate multiple occurrences and at a level of activity which may indicate an intent to do harm and a lack of understanding and appreciation on the impact of their actions. Assessment is meant to understand the occurrence in these contexts and to act appropriately to address the issue, level of risk and support/administrative activities required.

PROCEDURE C **MAY LEAD TO A DECISION TO REPORT**

Response C may follow from Response B above and where there may be an escalation of concern and where the issue has not been resolved satisfactorily and continues to present as problematic.

Response C also includes the “Duty to Report” where there is a significant concern that abuse may have occurred following the definition as provide in this Handbook.

Steps for Procedure C

- Step 1, C** Following from B there is a prevalence of Response C indicators and an indication of high risk. Counsellor (CRT) to further assess.
- Step 2, C**
- Counsellor Completes Summative Assessment Report based on all available information. Summative Assessment includes child/significant other support plan.
 - Summative Report reviewed by HoS and CPT – implement Support plan.
- Step 3, C** The HoS articulates Disciplinary Procedure to be followed. (In the instance where it is a Staff member the Renaissance Disciplinary Policy comes into immediate effect. In the instance where it is a student the Renaissance Positive Behaviour will come into effect).
- Step 4, C** HoS sanctions formal investigation which is to be concluded within 48 hours (Vietnamese Authority are consulted on time-line for formal investigation). HoS directs and implements Renaissance Disciplinary Policy/ Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Step 5, C** Report to appropriate Vietnamese Authority. In cases that require Renaissance to report to local authorities, the reporting will always take place by the School Counsellor.
- Step 6, C** Follow-up & support affected parties. Liaise with Authorities where necessary.

Response C Indicators

- ✓ Student to student physical/ verbal/ emotional interactions which are clearly and intentionally motivated to injure or cause physical, emotional and psychological harm and which have been applied in a severe manner and/or on multiple occasions and which have placed a child at risk of harm and acting out behaviors (i.e. suicide ideation, depression, etc.).
- ✓ The use of inappropriate and negative parenting practices which are: used as the normative standard for dealing with child behavior and which are based in negative sanction-physical, emotional, psychological disciplinary practices; ongoing and which are impacting upon the child’s general behavior pattern in a detrimental manner.

- ✓ Severe and/ or more than one instance of Bullying/ Cyber-bullying and which are clearly planned and motivated by the intent to cause harm and have placed a child at high risk of physical/ emotional and psychological harm (i.e. suicide ideation, depression, etc.).
- ✓ Inappropriate student/teacher interactions which are repetitive, based in unnecessary/ inappropriate negative sanctions and/ or an inappropriate use of power and which are negatively impacting upon the child's behavior and health and well-being.

The immediate concern for following Response C are the presence of those acts which clearly indicate severe/ multiple occurrences, at a level of activity, a clear intent to do harm and a lack of understanding and appreciation for the impact of their actions. The presence of any and/ or all of these indicators are to be taken as a high level of risk.

SOME BASIC GUIDELINES FOR DEALING SENSITIVELY WITH ABUSE DISCLOSURE

When a Teacher/ Staff receives a disclosure of Abuse they will ***gather information as gently as possible.***

Remember that the child has approached you because ***they trust you*** and that is your greatest strength/ support for the child. If you believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse you must report to the Counsellor.

This should happen as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. If staff are uncertain whether their concerns are valid or not then they need to report the concern anyway.

Use empathy in your listening and responses to the child. Empathy is the ability to *feel and to use the feelings of the other to help them* focus and process their pain, whereas *sympathy is taking ownership of the victim's feelings, expressing those feelings and potentially marginalizing the child's immediate and lived experience.* Empathy has all the emotional power of sympathy except that empathy is non-judgmental, supportive, focussed, and at a high level of listening.

Do not interview the child, rather, the child will disclose to you in their own words and behaviours and you will gather this information to provide to the Counsellor immediately. The counsellor will conduct the full interview for assessing the possible abuse and the action(s) to follow.

Listen to what the child has to say with an open mind.

Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events

Do not try to tell the child's story simply listen and affirm their disclosure to you.

Gently prompt the child to continue to share with you their experience and their feelings. *Do not force* the child to provide details, rather, *focus on how the child is/ was feeling* both as the abuse occurred and their feeling right now.

Affirm them for their bravery and trust and for talking to you and let them know you are there to help as well as others who work at the school.

Make a report of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present as well as what was said. We will not ask children to write a statement (see Referral Form).

Try to have a **female witness** present if a female child is involved.

Never promise the child that what they have said can be *kept secret*.

Explain *that we may have a responsibility to report* what the child has said to someone else.

Other Related School Policies

There are some other school policies which support our Policy on Abuse and Protection and these are listed in this Section of the Handbook. Additionally, there is a Hyperlink in each section of the Child Protection Handbook that will take you to the stated relevant policy which supports that Section.

1. Positive Behaviour Policy
2. Home School Communication Policy
3. Staff Disciplinary Policy
4. Recruitment Policy
5. Good Punctuality and Attendance Policy
6. Attendance Policy
7. Anti-Bullying & Anti-Discrimination Policy

Contact Guidelines for Faculty and Staff

The purpose of this document is to give teaching staff simple guidelines, which should serve to establish strong child-centred and protective practices in our daily teacher-student interactions. These practices are a reflection of our duty of care to our students. The overarching principle is that child welfare and child protection concerns are a primary concern for all teaching staff.

The aim of this document is to outline strong child protective practices while teaching. However, we cannot foresee all circumstances of teacher-student interactions. It is incumbent on all teaching staff to approach all their interactions with students with their duty of care in mind. Teaching staff must follow the reporting procedures if, or when, they have child welfare or child protection concerns.

General Daily Interactions

Faculty and staff must be cognizant of their conduct while interacting with students. These interactions should reflect the school's child-centred values. It is important to use positive, respectful and encouraging approaches as much as possible. Teaching staff must avoid overly critical and detrimental communication styles. Criticisms should be constructive. Examples of these negative communications which should be avoided, are sarcasm, blaming, threats, insults and any other communication, which diminishes the dignity of the student. Interactions between students and teaching staff must never be secretive.

Online Communication

Faculty and staff must limit their online communication with students to the approved list of applications. This communication should reflect the same child-centred values that the school promotes. Faculty and staff should not share images or videos of their students except for school purposes, and only with the prior written consent of the student's guardians. Teaching staff must never share any form of online material with their students that is not age appropriate.

When Alone with a Student

Teaching staff do find themselves alone with students; this happens when teaching. However, it should happen only when deemed necessary and occur in the full knowledge of other teaching staff. Teaching staff should limit the amount of occasions they are alone with students, and limit the length of time of these interactions. When these interactions do occur, teachers should ensure they meet the student where they can be seen. If meeting in any room, best practice would be to have the door open, or in a room with clear windows, to be easily seen

Physical Touch

Teaching staff must be aware of how physical touch can be received, and perceived by others. Best practice would be to limit touching to non-intrusive gestures such as Hi-5's. Hugging around the shoulder is preferable to frontal hugging. Never touch a student anywhere that would be covered by a swimming suit. The physical gesture should be a positive gesture, celebration, or acknowledgement. Best practice would be to share these physical gestures in open sight of other staff members and not in private.

The school recognizes that appropriate touch is age specific, as such, appropriate touch in an early childhood class will be different to what is appropriate in older grades. However, a guiding principal in this matter is that all touch must be respectful, non-punitive and preserve the dignity of the student.

Classroom Supervision

Faculty and staff must be aware of their responsibilities when supervising their students. Teaching staff should not leave their students unsupervised while in any classroom or teaching areas. Teaching staff should be cognizant of the student/teacher ratio; to ensure there is adequate supervision of the students.

Changing Rooms/ Toileting

Faculty and staff should avoid using the same toilets and changing rooms as their students. Teaching staff must be gender conscious and not enter the opposite sexes toilets. If it is necessary to share these facilities, use a cubicle and avoid being the only adult. Do not remain past the necessary time. When changing for PE, or other activities, teaching staff must not change with the students.

Internet and Digital Device Supervision

Faculty and staff should be aware of the dangers of students being online without adequate supervision. Teaching staff should vet websites their students are using to ensure they are appropriate. This should be done prior to their students visiting the site. Teaching staff should monitor their students while online. Best practice would be to teach the students how to protect themselves while online. Teaching staff should take steps to ensure that their students know to report any occasion where they feel uncomfortable online to an adult. Teaching staff should ensure all RISS students are aware of safe internet practices. If your students use devices in school, the teacher involved must store the device safely, and ensure their appropriate use.

Guests Speaker/ Visitors

When visitors or guest speakers are with the students, it is important that the teaching staff remain with the class and at no time allow the guest speaker or guest to be alone with a student or students. The material should be age appropriate and have an educational value. Best practice would be to vet these visitors and the content of their presentation prior to any exposure to the student body to ensure it is appropriate.

Behavioural/ Educational Needs

It is an indication of professional competence, to recognize the limits of one's professional competence. If you feel, a student would benefit from receiving additional learning support or behaviour support, teaching staff should contact their divisional counsellor or learning support specialist. Teaching staff should apply the recommendations of these support professionals to ensure the best outcomes for their students.

Ongoing Child Protection Training/ PD

Faculty and staff must ensure that they maintain their understanding of the definitions of child abuse and neglect, and signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect within the school's professional development calendar. Faculty and staff must ensure they are aware of the child welfare and protection reporting and follow up procedure and external child protection training and professional development is also encouraged.

THE LISTENING EAR PROGRAMME

The Listening Ear Program is a new initiative whose focus is to extend ourselves beyond our current practice for supporting children in need.

Several staff have volunteered their time to make themselves available during the school day, at designated times, to listen to those children who may be experiencing some difficulty and who need someone to talk to "right now".

The Listening Ear Volunteers have received some basic training on Active Listening in preparation for dealing with issues from: day to day peer conflict and challenges; to the focused use of active listening in cases where some form of abuse may be present. The Listening Ear Volunteers are not intended to replace the work of the Counsellor, Pastoral or Support Services. Rather the Listening Ear Volunteers are charged with the simple but very important act of allowing the child to tell their story, whatever that may be, in the moment, and when they need to talk. The Listening Ear Volunteers do not investigate or try to address the issue through an intervention as this is the work of the School Counsellor, certainly in matters where some form abuse may be present.

We believe that pursuing a safe and healthy school environment means taking direct action to support our children and the Listening Ear Program is one way we believe we can achieve this worthy goal.

Regular training on "Active Listening and Helping Skills" is key to the success of the Listening Ear Program. Regular and ongoing professional development, with the inclusion of the Child Protection team, Pastoral & Form Tutors, medical staff, and facilitated through the School Counsellor as a part of his/her school wide role is the means to accomplish this.

CONCLUSION

The Renaissance Protection Policy and Handbook is a guide for addressing safeguarding and child protection in our school. The success of this policy rests with a school wide commitment to respond to the needs of our children in ways that address the changing demographics of living in an ever changing Vietnamese society.

With the tremendous growth and development being experienced in Vietnam it is inevitable that new challenges will emerge and these will impact upon, at the very least, family life &

family roles/ structures, gender roles and individual and collective identities and the wider social milieu of Vietnamese Society. The school can exercise its commitment and responsibility for the education of our children by extending and continuing to be pro-active and responding to the needs of our children, families and Vietnamese society.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1 CODE OF CONDUCT

Renaissance International School Saigon is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all adults rendering a service to the school and interacting with students in any capacity (hereafter referred to as Renaissance staff).

The public and private conduct of Renaissance faculty and staff can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact or can cause great harm if those interactions are inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We should be aware of our own and other persons' 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 sexual behaviours with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for students in school and on school events.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be a culturally appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. Physical contact with children 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 a child or young person are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

Renaissance staff and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child. but the school recognizes that in cases where a student is at risk to themselves or others, physical restraint which is proportionate may be necessary, but that restraint must never be punitive.

We are obligated to intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the Counsellor as described in the Child Protection Policy of the school.

Renaissance staff must refrain from the illegal possession and/ or illegal use of substances and are expected to refrain from the irresponsible consumption of alcohol at all times. Staff, when performing official duties, must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The use of tobacco products is also strictly prohibited. Adults must never buy or share alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes with students. Additionally, adults must store their prescribed medication safely and out of reach of others.

Renaissance staff should not accept gifts, unless they are in the spirit of appreciation, from students or families. Personal gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians is strictly prohibited. Gifts given as school recognition rewards are recognized as a valid practice. Gifts given with the intention of grooming is prohibited and any suspicion of grooming will be investigated thoroughly.

Communication with children is governed by the key safety concept of transparency.

The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between staff and children:

- ✓ Always communicate with students in an encouraging, respectful and appropriate manner that reflects the highest educational and Vietnamese cultural values. All actions and decisions should reflect a child-centred practice.
- ✓ Communication between staff and students outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- ✓ Social media and email exchanges between a student and staff acting on behalf of the school are to be made using an approved form of school communication (i.e., school email, school Facebook page).
- ✓ Do not post images of Renaissance students on personal social media accounts.
- ✓ Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- ✓ Do not share, purchase or show materials (electronically or otherwise) to students that are inappropriate to young people.
- ✓ Use online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with students may only do so for activities involving school business.

The school will investigate all suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct.

My signature confirms that I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and the Conduct Guidelines respective to my role at Renaissance International School Saigon. I will adhere to the Child Protection Policy at Renaissance International School, Saigon.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2 Commentary on Report on Child Protection MOLISA/ UNICEF 2009

Counsellor Commentary:

The Report provides an overview of Vietnam's current state of the art for Child abuse and protection.

It has been said (UNICEF, United Nations, Vietnam Foundation, NGO's in Vietnam, Vietnamese Academics etc.) that Vietnam has come a long way in significantly approaching the issue of Child Abuse and Protection. Additionally, there is recognition that while Vietnamese law is beginning to inherently address this issue as a philosophical, foundational and societal priority the infrastructure to actively address abuse and protection is not at that stage of development where services, resources, funding and integrated organizational responses are readily available. There is however, a recognition that there is need to plan, develop and organize around this issue and to seek out the wisdom of those who have some experience with abuse and protection and for them to participate and inform current and future initiatives aimed at strengthening Vietnam's abuse and protection responsibilities.

Having said this, it is incumbent upon those institutions who are dealing with abuse and protection to find the ways and means to deal with this issue as a feature of their overall educational vision, mission and in the day to life of their schools.

Child abuse is more evident now that it was previously and it can be expected that the International School community will have a significant role in promoting and addressing child abuse and protection in their institutions.

The Report

In recent years, the Party and State of Vietnam have gradually developed and improved Vietnam's legal system to secure better consistency, reliability and promptly react to *the newly emerging social relations* as well as to steadily integrate into the internationally shared legal regulations. This increasingly improved legal system can be considered a firm foundation for the protection, care and education of children, for the balanced development of children to shoulder the future of the country.

Many legal normative documents have been introduced to address various aspects of child protection. Basic principles and roles and responsibilities for the child protection system have been defined in the Law on the Protection, Care and Education of Children, passed by the National Assembly of Vietnam in 1991 and amended in 2004.

A Child Protection Strategy (2006-2010) has also been developed (still in draft form) to provide greater strategic guidance. In addition, several Programmes have been introduced and implemented to address specific categories of children in special circumstances, including the:

- ✓ National Programme for the protection of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances 1999-2002 (Decision No.134/1999/QĐ-TTĐ);
- ✓ the National Program of Action for Preventing and Tackling the Issues of Street Children, Sexual Abuse of Children and Child Labour for 2004-2010 (programme #19);
- ✓ the National Program of Action against Prostitution during 2006-2010 (draft); the National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Humans Decision No. 312/2005/QĐ-TTĐ by the Prime Minister on the approval of projects under the Action Plan against women and child trafficking for 2005-2010;
- ✓ Decision 17/2007/QĐ-TTĐ on the reception and community reintegration protocols for returned women and children victims of trafficking and the National Plan on Crime Prevention for 2005-2010 (including provisions on crimes committed by children and against children); and
- ✓ Decision 65/2005/QĐ-TTĐ of Prime Minister on the approval of Project on “Care of orphans, abandoned children, children with severe disabilities, children victims of toxic chemicals and children infected with HIV/AIDS”.

Vietnam is in the process of gradually developing a system of child protection organizations from the central to grassroots level. However, *the country does not as yet have a comprehensive, integrated system for preventing and responding to children in special circumstances*, and as yet there are no designated, qualified social workers at the grassroots level to respond to child protection cases. Contingents of specialised staff at all levels working with children, families, and communities remain insufficient in quantity and quality, and social work has not been recognized as a profession.

Social welfare policy in general and child protection approaches in particular are *characterised by a “charitable” rather than rights-based approach. The provision of social services to vulnerable groups relies largely on voluntary efforts and non-profit organisations, rather than trained, paid professionals*⁴.

The former Committee for Population, Family and Children (*now MOLISA*) *has responsibility for state administration over child protection and is responsible for coordinating the implementation of programs, plans for children. However, there is no one national lead or focal agency responsible for all aspects of child protection. Implementing responsibility for various aspects of child protection has been designated to different Ministries and Sectors in line with their own functions as well as the classification of children.*

Under the Law on the Protection, Care and Education of Children, and Decree No. 36/2005/ND-CP on the implementation of that law, responsibility has been assigned as follows:

* **CPFC:** responsible for State management on matters relating to children, including developing policies and laws for children; organising the implementation of programmes on the protection and care of disadvantaged children; coordinating education and awareness on child protection;

State management of child-support establishments with mixed elements; collection and analysis of data on child protection; and promulgation of criteria, norms and guidelines on child

protection and child-support establishments. Under Programme 19, CPFC also has primary responsibility for schemes on juvenile delinquency prevention and support for street children. Under the National Plan against Trafficking and Women and Children 2006-2010, it has primary responsibility for prevention of trafficking in children and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (This has been transferred to MOLISA since August 2007).

* **MOLISA:** prime responsibility for promulgating regimes and policies towards children with deformities or disabilities, orphans and street children; State management over social support establishments, detoxification establishments and vocational training establishments; and promulgating and inspecting the enforcement of laws on child labour. Under Programme 19, *MOLISA also has primary responsibility for the scheme on prevention of and solution to the situation of sexual abuse of children and the scheme on prevention and solution to children working in heavy labour and hazardous conditions.* It is also primarily responsible, under the National Plan against Trafficking and Women and Children 2006-2010, for organising vocational training, job placement, and community re-integration for the cross-border trafficked women and children who returned home.

* **Ministry of Public Security:** responsible for application of measures to prevent and combat acts of infringing upon children's rights and educating and reforming juveniles in conflict with the law; They are also the coordinating agency for implementing the National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Women and Children, as well as the Plan on the Prevention and Fight against Prostitution.

* **Ministry of Justice:** providing legal assistance for disadvantaged children; managing adoption (foreign and domestic); conducting awareness and education on child protection legislation;

* **Ministry of Health:** responsible for improving the quality of medical treatment for children, with special attention to children in special circumstances

* **Ministry of Education:** *Prime responsibility for developing programmes for awareness and education on child protection;* adopting policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction, and appropriate measures for disadvantaged children to integrate themselves into study; coordinate with MOLISA to define educational programmes for schools and classes for children with disabilities; define the education programme for reform schools.

* **Planning and Investment Ministry:** *to develop child protection plans and include them in annual and long-term socio-economic development plans; mobilise domestic and international resources for child protection work*

* **Ministry of Finance:** guide other ministries and People's Committee in making annual and long term *budget estimates for child protection*, propose policies for mobilising funding sources for the work of child protection; In general, implementing responsibility in the field of child protection has *been assigned under various programmes and plans of actions addressing particular categories of children in special circumstances, rather than through a comprehensive, systems building approach.*

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Websites visited for further research and information on child Abuse and Protection:

- ✓ https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Final.CP_Strategy_paper.Jan_2007.pdf
- ✓ http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/webfm_send/735
- ✓ https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Implementation_Handbook_for_the_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child_Part_1_of_3.pdf
- ✓ <http://www.bisb.org/school-life/policies/>
- ✓ <http://www.depedroxii.org/download/childprotection/child%20protection%20policy%20and%20anti-bullying%20policies%20of%20Pol%20NHS.pdf>
- ✓ <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/child-protection-basics-fhi360-child-protection-toolkit>