

STUDENTS

Policy Number: 8.50

Subject: Child Protection Policy

The Board of Directors of The American International School/Dhaka (the "**Board**" and the "**School**", respectively) recognizes that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities.

The goal of this policy is to ensure that all parties work together to ensure the safety and well-being of children. This policy recognizes the proactive training that AISD must undertake to educate students, parents, faculty and staff about child protection. It also stresses the process and procedures to be followed in cases of suspected child abuse.

In its policies, practices and activities, the School will adhere to the following principles and guidelines:

- recognize that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- recognize the education of all members of the AISD community is critical in the child protection program;
- adopt safe practices to minimize the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and adopt procedures to protect staff from conduct which may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in ensuring the protection of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters, subject to reporting requirements.
- fully co-operate with the relevant authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;

1. Adherence To Applicable Practices, Policies and Laws

This policy is based on the generally accepted practices and procedures in American international schools and seeks to comply with generally accepted child protection laws.

The School Superintendent shall be responsible to develop all necessary education, training, policy planning and case management in order to prevent, identify and respond to child abuse and neglect.

2. Training

The School's administration shall implement a system-wide educational program for the School community regarding child protection and their duties and responsibilities. This will include age appropriate instruction and education for students, parents, faculty and staff.

Mandatory staff training will be conducted annually, at the beginning of the school year, to ensure that all staff members are knowledgeable about the signs of potential abuse, how to recognize harmful behavior and the mandatory reporting policy and procedures. Voluntary parent education in these areas will also be provided. In addition, there will be an age appropriate educational program for students identifying abusive behaviors and how to effectively deal with such.

3. **Mandatory Reporters**

When there is *reasonable cause* to *suspect* that a child has been *mistreated* or *abused – physically, emotionally, or sexually* – or is *neglected*, a report **must** be made. The term “child” refers to a person under the age of 18.

Mistreatment or Abuse - Any behavior directed toward a child that endangers or impairs a child’s physical or emotional health and development.

Physical - any non-accidental injury to a child by another person. These injuries may include beatings, shaking, burning, choking, biting, immersion in scalding water or other injuries that result in bruises, welts, fractures, scars, burns, internal injuries or any other type of injury.

Emotional - includes the failure of another person to provide an appropriate and supportive environment, and includes acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of a child. Such acts include restricting a child’s movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other nonphysical forms of hostile treatment.

Sexual - is the exploitation of a child or adolescent for the sexual gratification of another person.

Neglect - the failure of a parent to provide for the development of the child - where the parent is in a position to do so - in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions.

This policy mandates that all adults, any individual over the age of 18, must report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to an AISD designated child, any person under the age of 18, protection liaison. At AISD, the school counselors fulfill the role of child protection liaisons. The mandatory reporter requirement applies to any person who knows about child abuse or has a good-faith reason to suspect that someone has committed child abuse. This means any member of the School's community to include all faculty or staff employed in any full or part time position and all school volunteers. Any failure of a mandatory reporter to make a report may result in termination of employment or position.

All School personnel shall complete an **Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status** form created by the School. This completed form will be placed in each person’s personnel file located in the Human Resources Office.

4. **Reporting Obligations**

All “Mandatory Reporters” are obligated to report as soon as possible, but definitely within twenty-four (24) hours, to one of the School's Designated Liaisons when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child, under the age of eighteen, has been abused (physically, sexually, or emotionally) or neglected, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Any mandatory reporter who sees, hears about, knows about, or has a suspicion of possible child abuse or neglect must take the following steps:

- (a) He/she must immediately report the information that he/she knows or suspects by contacting the AISD Designated Liaison. A standardized reporting form will be utilized in this process.
- (b) If an individual is uncertain whether the situation before him/her requires reporting, he/she must consult with an AISD Designated Liaison.

Immediate action is essential to protect all children at the School, and is required by this policy.

ALL SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHALL PROVIDE ANY AND ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES, THE AISD DESIGNATED LIAISON OR A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.

The mandated reporter will not inform the alleged perpetrator of the child abuse or neglect that a report has been made. Any notification will be issued from the School Superintendent or his/her designee.

The duty to examine, evaluate the validity of the accusation, and enact any action is not imposed on the reporter, but rather on the AISD administration or a relevant authority.

5. **Rights of Mandated Reporters**

Mandated reporters are entitled to immunity for any report of child abuse or neglect as long as the report is made in good faith. The school will fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters. Any anonymous calls/reports of sexual harassment shall be considered as an unofficial report of any such event. Thus, formal charges can not be pressed against the accused person based on this report. However, any such call/report requesting anonymity will be considered as an unofficial means to inform the School administration that a sexual harassment incident may have occurred.”

6. **Investigations**

The investigation into the accuracy of any report of child abuse or neglect shall be conducted by the relevant authorities when available. In the absence of any relevant authority, the investigation will default to the school administration under the supervision of the School Superintendent. The School shall fully cooperate with any relevant authorities in their investigation of all reports of abuse or neglect.

By enrolling the child at AISD, the parents or guardians give permission for the school administration to conduct the investigation and the parents or guardians agree to fully cooperate in such investigation.

7. **Vetting of Prospective Staff**

All staff, both employed and volunteer, will be vetted in accordance with generally accepted practices conducted in American international schools. The School administration will require that a police clearance certificate be provided from the last country of residence and/or that a criminal background check be completed. Where feasible, a USA FBI check will be required. The most thorough level of background check for each employee will be required and will be stated by the administration. In addition, as part of the employment process, all employees and volunteers will be required to disclose any criminal child abuse convictions as part of the application and employment

process. Failure to provide this information will be grounds for dismissal. This applies to teaching and non-teaching staff.

8. **Confidentiality**

The School will fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Adopted: November 17, 2015