

**Child Protection  
at  
American International School Dhaka**



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# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Additionally, they are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School of Dhaka (AISD) endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), of which our host country, Bangladesh, is a signatory.

AISD has a duty of care to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young people. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect.

It is mandatory that all staff employed at AISD must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect including whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that the 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 the AISD Child Protection Policy. Further, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective diplomatic mission, or to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country. This policy aims to ensure that students at our school learn in a safe and nurturing environment which promotes and enhances their emotional, physical and social well-being.

Underpinning AISD's commitment to child protection are our school beliefs which guide our practices, code of conduct, and treatment of all people, deeming some actions as unacceptable behavior within the confines of our school. As part of our commitment, AISD will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy annually to students, will provide training for all staff, will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children, and will review the policy annually for compliance and effectiveness.

In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, AISD will ensure a full investigation is carried out following a carefully designed course of due process. Maintaining the safety of the child will be the highest priority.

It is the expectation of the AISD Board and the Superintendent that every member of our school community, whatever their role or level of responsibility, upholds this policy and takes responsibility for the protection of children.

Stephen Herrera

Superintendent

# Policy Introduction

## Dictionary of Terms

AISD School Board of Trustees: A group of individuals appointed for 2 years as representatives of the School parent body to oversee the management and related policies of the School.

Child Protection Team: Response team made up of at minimum: divisional counselor, divisional principal, and superintendent. Other counselors, school psychologist, or school nurse can be called upon to join the team. The purpose of the team is to consult and determine next steps whenever there is a child protection case pending.

Sex Offender Registry: Sex Offender Registries provide details of sexual offenses committed by citizens of a particular jurisdiction. It is designed to keep track of people with a criminal history for sexual offenses in order to minimize risk to the public.

Staff: Refers to all employees at every level of the organization whether they be permanent full time or part-time contractually employed by AISD.

Students: Children and young people of all ages enrolled at AISD.

Personnel: Used interchangeably with the term 'Staff' but additionally includes volunteers acting in formal roles for the School.

## Guiding Principles

AISD has adopted and applied the four fundamental principles of the **UNCRC Child Rights** statement in the creation of this policy:

1. Children should neither benefit nor suffer because of their race, color, gender {gender identity, transgender, gender expression, gender nonconforming}, language, religion, national, social or ethnic origin, or because of any political or other opinion; because of their caste, property or birth status; or because they are disabled.
2. Policies, procedures, and actions affecting children should put their best interests first and benefit them in the best possible way.
3. The leadership of AISD must protect children and help ensure their development – physically, emotionally, morally, and socially.
4. Children have the right to have their say in decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

## Articles of the UNCRC

There are two key articles in the UNCRC on which this policy is based:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Article 34 – The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

## Scope of Application

The protection of children is a collective community responsibility. This policy will be read, understood, and adhered to by all adults engaged at AISD including, but not limited to the following roles:

- Board of Trustees - with presentation by counselors
- Superintendent
- Section Principals
- School Counselors
- Administrative staff
- All local and international teaching staff (including teaching assistants)
- Coaches/Activity Leaders
- Parents
- Volunteers
- Food Service Workers (both internal or external)
- Security Staff
- School Drivers
- Facilities Staff (including custodians, gardeners, and maintenance)

## Accessibility of Policy

This policy should be translated into Bangla and other languages, if possible, so that it is easily accessible and understood by all staff working at AISD and parents of students. AISD management must ensure that any staff with low literacy skills are provided with support in reading this document.

This policy must be accessible to all AISD staff in hard copy (one in the libraries and one in HR). The policy must be accessible to the parents of students via the AISD website and in the appropriate handbooks for students and parents.

## Training Obligations

All staff, including part-time, substitutes and anyone routinely in contact with students, must attend a Child Protection Policy training session within the first month from the start of their employment.

All staff will be provided with updated training annually.

# Definitions of Abuse

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures according to their child-rearing behaviors, gender role responsibilities, and expectations. The primary determination of abuse is that it is dependent on some form of a relationship that is used to meet the needs of the more powerful person, typically either a member of the family, a teacher, or a friend. Research guides much of the definition that is based on understanding the impact of certain behaviors.

AISSD defines child abuse (but does not limit the definition of abuse) as the following:

## Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power; the activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including but not limited to:

**Contact forms** of sexual abuse such as:

- Fondling a child's genitals or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator
- Rubbing the perpetrator's genitals against the child's body
- Masturbation
- Oral sex
- Vaginal and anal penetration

**Noncontact forms** of sexual abuse such as:

- Making sexual comments (verbal, letter, telephone, email, text)
- Voyeurism
- Exposure to pornography
- Perpetrator exposing parts of their body or the child's body
- Inappropriate (sexual poses, nude, and/or partially nude) photography of children

## 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 in the oral, genital, or anal areas
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Refusing to change into PE clothes, fear of bathrooms
- A child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint

## Neglect and Negligent Treatment

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres. This includes health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers. This includes the failure to properly supervise or the high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, emotional, moral or social development.

### Possible Indicators of Neglect

- Child is unwashed or hungry
- Parents are uninterested in child's academic performance
- Parents do not respond to repeated communications from the school
- Child does not want to go home
- Both parents or legal guardians are absent from Dhaka 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

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child.

This may involve name-calling, put-downs, or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual, or emotional development. It also involves repeated exposure to family violence or being forced to participate in a conflict as a tool for spying or psychological pressure.

### Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental, and emotional development is delayed
  - High anxiety
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
  - Fear of new situations
  - Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
  - Drug or alcohol abuse
  - Chronic running away
  - Compulsive stealing
  - Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
  - Attention-seeking behavior
    - Persistent tiredness
    - Lying



## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers, or is *likely* to suffer, significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child's body.

## Child Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, emotional, moral, or social-emotional development.

### Student Use of Technology

At times students may use technology in inappropriate ways such as viewing or playing excessively violent or sexualized videos games, viewing pornography, accessing or viewing other harmful content, or may engage in cyberbullying. These activities can be detrimental to a child's mental health, educational, or social-emotional development.

## Grooming

Grooming is defined as the predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. It occurs when an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a student or with a person who has care, supervision, or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another person. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. For example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or caregiver for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

## Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
- Bruises of different ages (various colors)
- 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

### Early Warning Signs to Look for in Potential Groomers:

- Has "favorite" student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with child(ren)
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualized talk in the presence of students/children

## **Peer to Peer or Sibling Abuse**

Peer to peer or sibling abuse occurs when a child or young person uses their power to engage a child in unwanted sexual contact or activity causing physical and emotional harm. It may be garnered by one or all of the following factors:

- Superior age
- Developmental stage
- Intellectual status
- Physical strength or position of strength

Peer to peer or sibling abuse may involve (but is not limited to) the following:

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Socializes with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships
- Sexual harassment
- Sexting
- Unwanted kissing and sexual touching
- Sexual pressure and coercion
- Sexual assault, including rape

## **Other Reasons to Disclose:**

There will be other situations where disclosure is needed even if the situation is not directly an indicator of abuse and neglect. However, these situations involving students need to be disclosed for the safety of the student:

- Student use of drugs or alcohol, especially when student is incapacitated or may require medical assistance
- Risk taking behaviors that can lead to harm (i.e. driving under the influence, any actions leading to risk of physical injury)
- Self-harm and self-injury
- Thoughts, plans, attempt of suicide or homicide
- Eating concerns (i.e. refusal to eat, bingeing and purging, extreme weight loss)

# Reports and Allegations Guidelines

## **What happens after suspected abuse or neglect is reported?**

Where there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report his or her suspicions to the counselor or immediate supervisor using the Report of Concern (See Appendix). In all cases, the Principal and Superintendent will be notified.

All staff are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect.

All AISD employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect should be made to the counselor or immediate supervisor within 24 hours for immediate response.

### **Step 1: Information Gathering**

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the staff member will report the incident and seek advice from the division counselor or immediate supervisor within 24 hours. The counselor completes the [Report of Concern](#) in collaboration with the reporter. If the supervisor is the person contacted, the supervisor will ensure the counselor becomes aware of the incident. The counselor will work with the division principal to develop a plan to take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team, as needed, to address the report. For all reports, the superintendent will also be informed.

In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained.

The following procedure will be used:

- 1) Interview staff members as necessary and document information relative to the case;
- 2) Consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school;
- 3) Counselor and Child Protection Team will follow a trauma informed approach when interviewing the child
- 4) Report the status of the case to the division principal and determine course of follow-up actions.
  - A) If warranted, forward report to the Child Protection Team (move to Step 2)
  - B) If report is not substantiated, enter case into Psych/Counseling Note on PowerSchool and report update to the original reporter.

## Step 2: Family Consultation

Based on the acquired information, a Plan of Action will be developed by the Child Protection Team to assist the child and family.

Actions that shall take place are:

- Counselor and division principal (and others as deemed necessary) meet with family, present the School's concerns, review the Child Protection Policy, and establish an action plan.
- Ongoing observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or division principal.

Possible follow-up actions include:

- Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information. Depending upon the age of the child, these discussions may include drawing pictures and playing with dolls to elicit more information as to what may have occurred.
- Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling with [Release of Information](#) to counselor/psychologist.
- Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concerns with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
- Consultation with the diplomatic mission of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school's legal advisor.

### **Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, 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 depression, major anxiety, dissociation, and suicidal ideation.

### **Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:**

- Severe or ongoing physical abuse, neglect, or emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse or incest

### **When families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:**

- The diplomatic mission of the country of the involved family
- The employer sponsoring the involved family
- The home-of-record welfare office
- Local law enforcement

## Step 3: Follow Up Procedures

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse or neglect:

- The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
- The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
- The counselor will determine, with division principal, what communication is essential in order for the faculty to support the student.
- The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use to provide emotional support, if deemed necessary.
- The counselor will maintain contact with any outside therapists involved in addressing the incident in order to update the progress of the child in school.
- Follow up meeting between administrator and counselor to evaluate progress, debriefing on progress.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves someone from outside the family, the same procedures will be followed, with the focus of the school's efforts to protect the child and work with the family.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of AISD,x the same steps of disclosure are followed with the exception that the division principal and Human Resources Director (if involvement includes a local staff member), not the counselor, will take the lead through the steps. The principal will immediately inform the superintendent. The superintendent will inform the board chair. Any further actions might include anything from a reprimand to termination of employment.

## Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

Children or young people may disclose abuse to you. The welfare of the child is paramount. The child's best interests should guide your response. How disclosure is handled can affect the child's self-concept, sense of shame and blame, and long-term prospects for recovery from the incident of abuse.

The abuse may have been perpetrated by another staff member or volunteer, an adult in the student's immediate or extended family, an unrelated adult, another child or young person, or a sibling. In some rare cases, abuse may be perpetrated by a stranger.

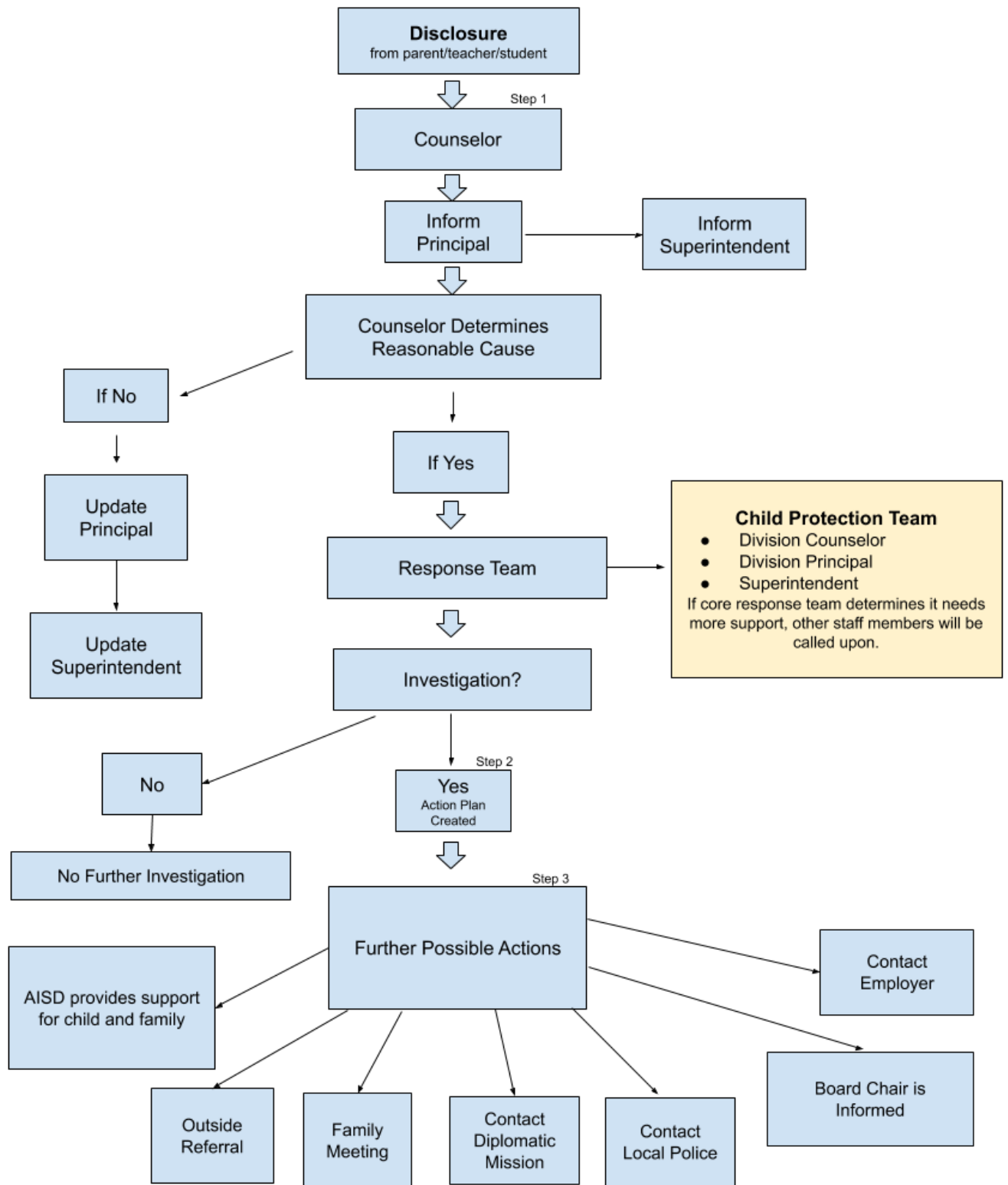
Regardless of the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child, the guidelines for handling the disclosure in a sensitive manner are the same by using a trauma-informed approach.

## **Guidelines for Handling a Disclosure**

- Do not agree to keep their disclosure a secret. If you agree to keep a secret and then make a report, the child will view you as breaking your trust with them.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Your role is to listen, letting the child explain what happened in their own words. Do not pressure the child for a great amount of detail.
- In age-appropriate language, praise the child for being courageous enough to tell you about this incident. Assure them that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously, that you believe the child, that what happened is not their fault, and they are not in trouble.
- Explain that you may need to write down information so that you can remember it later. Take notes recording the child's words, descriptions, phrases and terms.
- Take note of the time, date, place, and any physical marks on the child resulting from the abuse. Sign and date the notes.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to express disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better or promises that you can't keep.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator of abuse.
- If the child does not want to go home, this should be considered an emergency.

## **Privacy**

- Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all parties concerned. All documentation must be kept in a secure environment.
- When the superintendent feels it is appropriate, the board or management of the school will be informed of the incident; however, privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.
- When appropriate, the response team may consult with external agencies. Privacy regarding identities should be upheld when possible.
- When possible, the response team will relay potential safety concerns to a new school.



## Historical Abuse

It is not uncommon for people to report acts of abuse 20 to 25 years after the event. AISD is aware that community members or other people involved with AISD in the past may have a historical grievance, complaint, or allegation of abuse.

If a person presents with a historical grievance, complaint, or allegation, AISD will listen to the complainant with respect. AISD will employ the procedures as outlined for a current incident, allegation, grievance, or complaint. AISD will follow the above guidelines for dealing sensitively with incidents of historical abuse of children in a respectful age-appropriate manner. The adult needs to be understood, believed, and respected. The principles of confidentiality apply.

(See **Appendix 1** for the form for recording Reports and Allegations of Abuse – [Report of Concern](#))



# **Selection, Screening, and Induction of Staff and Volunteers**

AISD's selection, screening, and induction process for staff and volunteers has been developed to ensure that all staff members and volunteers are adequately screened prior to their appointment to ensure their suitability to work safely with children and young people. The selection, screening, and induction process involves the following steps:

1. Advertising positions
2. Position descriptions
3. Interviews
4. Identity Check
5. Qualifications check
6. Reference checks
7. Upon appointment – Sign the code of conduct

## **Advertising Positions**

All staff and volunteer position descriptions must clearly outline AISD's commitment to child protection. This is to express the importance of child protection and to deter would-be perpetrators from targeting our school.

When a position is advertised, *one of the following statements* must be included in the job advertisement:

- AISD is committed to the protection of all children and young people from harm
- AISD has a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse and neglect
- AISD has a strict child protection policy, against which all applicants will be assessed
- AISD requires that all applicants undergo stringent selection and screening processes before being allowed to work with children

## **Position Descriptions**

All positions, whether they are full-time roles, part-time roles, contract roles, or volunteer roles have a position description outlining key responsibilities and duties. Employees and volunteers will have a clear understanding of:

- Their responsibility to protect children and young people
- The parameters, boundaries, and responsibilities associated with their role
- Their responsibility to report child abuse, suspected child abuse, or any allegation of child abuse

The following statements must be included in all position descriptions or contracts:

- Safeguarding children from harm is a key responsibility for this role. It is your responsibility to provide children with an environment that is safe from physical harm, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

- It is your responsibility to report any incidents of abuse or neglect to the counselor or direct supervisor within 24 hours. If the counselor and direct supervisor are unavailable, you must report incidents to the principal. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information arrives to the counselor. If the child is in immediate danger, keep the child safe until you reach the counselor, principal, or superintendent.
- It is a condition of your employment at the school that if any criminal charges or convictions arise against your name related to children that you report this to the Superintendent.

## Interviews

All applicants are required to undergo an interview process. The interviewer(s) must have a comprehensive understanding of child protection.

In addition to the questions asked regarding an applicant's suitability for the role--paid or voluntary--questions regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children must be asked.

### **The key areas that should be explored and discussed are:**

- The applicant's beliefs and values in relation to the treatment of children and young people.
- The applicant's reasons for wanting to work with children and young people.
- The applicant's understanding of child protection measures and issues.
- The qualifications and skills that give the applicant the skills to work sensitively with children and young people.
- If applicable, any reasons for leaving any previous positions that involve work with children and young people.
- Any unexplained gaps in a person's resume should be explored.

During the course of candidacy, one of the following interview questions must be:

### **Scenario-based questions:**

- How would you respond to a student making a sexual advance towards you? (for MS/HS candidates)
- How would you respond if you found a student engaging in sexual activity with another student or even staff member?
- How would you respond to a student who is overtly flirting with you?
- How would you respond if you caught 2 kindergarten students showing private parts to each other? (for elementary candidates)

### **Direct questions:**

- Have you completely read our policy on child protection and safeguarding?
- Have you ever been spoken to about concerns in respect of your behavior with a child?
- Is there anyone who might suggest that you should not work with young people? Explain why.

## Identity Check

Before appointment, photo identification (either a passport or national ID) and one other form of identity document (e.g. driver's license, social security card, bank card, diploma, transcripts) must be presented and marked in the personnel file as "checked" or "viewed" to ensure that the person's identity is authenticated, including the date and by whom it was checked.

## Qualifications Check

If qualifications and training are applicable for the position, an official transcript must be viewed and marked in the personnel file as "checked" or "viewed", including the date and by whom. If the qualification is from an obscure university or college, a check on the validity of the institution is recommended.

## Criminal History Record Check

A criminal history record check is required for all staff. Local and international applicants must provide a criminal history check before the applicant is engaged to work at AISD. If a criminal history is revealed, the Superintendent must make a decision regarding whether to employ that person at AISD.

International applicants must provide a criminal history check from the country in which they are residing at the time a contract from AISD is offered. AISD will also conduct its internal background check through a reputable agency. Applicants who are unable to obtain a criminal history check from the country of their previous role (due to lack of formal protocols in that country) must provide a criminal history check from their current country of employment and/or country of origin. In addition, stringent reference checking from their last appointment is of paramount importance.

*In the event a qualified candidate for substitute teaching is unable to provide a police clearance, references submitted will be checked and verified by AISD before any offer of assignment.*

## Sex Offender Registry

Access to Sex Offender Registries is being investigated by AISD. It is our plan to complete a registry check when possible.

## Reference Checks

Before appointment to a position, all applicants are required to submit the name and contact details of *at least 2* references. The references must include at least one person who has supervised them in a previous role. The applicant must not be related to the reference.

Written references may be submitted, but they are not sufficient, solely. Verbal direct communication with references needs to be made in order to authenticate any written reference.

Reference checks should be executed by someone who has child protection training. The question schedule for the references should include some of the questions from the attached referee questions (See appendix 2.)

## Upon Appointment

All staff and volunteers must be inducted into the organization with a discussion regarding the central importance AISD imparts on its Child Protection Policy and its responsibility to protect children from harm.

All new staff and volunteers must be provided with the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct. A signed copy of the Code of Conduct must be returned within 5 days to the school administration office to be kept on record. (Staff Commitment to uphold Child Protection Policy: See appendix 3.)

The Child Protection Policy must also be made available to all parents of students at AISD.

# Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct contains practical guidelines to ensure that students are protected from intentional and unintentional harm from adults and from their own peers. The Code of Conduct is also designed to protect children from grooming behaviors.

The document alerts staff and volunteers to the prohibition of behaviors which could be perceived as grooming or in fact constitute grooming. For example, showing favoritism towards a child, inappropriate touching of a child, making sexual jokes or references, and acting outside the boundaries of the prescribed role. Enacting this Code protects students as well as the integrity of staff and volunteers.

## Breaches

Disciplinary procedures will be imposed on any person for a breach or failure to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Possible consequences of breaching this code may well depend on the seriousness of the breach and include but are not limited to:

- Counseling and training to address the behavior
- A formal warning
- Immediate removal from campus
- Suspension or expulsion (student)
- Suspension or termination of employment or voluntary role or membership (staff and/or campus members)
- Requirement to deliver a verbal or written apology to an aggrieved party
- Any other reasonable measure deemed appropriate by AISD administration

In the case of a criminal act, the matter will be referred to the police and possibly the respective diplomatic mission. Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Superintendent.

## Exceptions

There may be exceptional cases in which certain guidelines within the Code of Conduct are not strictly adhered to, for example in an emergency situation where swift action needs to be taken or a life will be placed in danger, or in a situation where an unforeseen circumstance arises. However, in these cases it is imperative that if action needs to be taken which breach these guidelines, that personnel seek prior

authorization from an immediate supervisor or if this is not possible, advise a supervisor immediately after the guidelines are breached and explain the context and why this action was required.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

Any sexual act (contact or noncontact) with a student by an adult is a breach of our code of conduct and will be dealt with and reported in the same way as other reports of abuse (following the steps of disclosure). Exposing children or young people to pornographic material through any medium (a non-contact act of sexual abuse) will be treated with equal seriousness as “contact” acts of sexual abuse.

In the event that a young person attempts to initiate an intimate relationship, the adult must take personal responsibility for discouraging and reporting such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such actions.

Relationships formed between older students and an AISD adult in positions of authority over them, must not become a sexual relationship for a period of at least 2 years past the time of the student leaving AISD, including a student who graduates from high school. Even if the young person is legally over the age of consent, the relationship has been formed under circumstances of authority of power so the matter is one of ethics. Sexual contact involving a young person (over 18) and an adult person placed in a position of authority over them, whether consensual, or not, may be perceived to be exploitative. There is usually a disparity between young person and the adult previously in the position of responsibility for them in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence.

## **One to One Contact With Students**

These guidelines are designed to protect students as well as the reputation and integrity of adults. Situations where students can be alone with staff members are potentially problematic for both staff and students.

The following guidelines are in place to ensure that students and staff feel safe and comfortable:

- A teacher (or any other staff member employed at the school) should avoid being alone with a student in a ratio of 1:1.
- Effort should be made to meet in public spaces or in places where other adults are in view during any activity outside of regular school hours.
- When a staff member is alone with a student, they should only be in a room where there is a window in the door, or alternatively, the door must be left open. Staff should not be in a room alone with a student where there is no window or they cannot be seen through the window or open door. Windows embedded in doors should not be covered with posters or blinds.
- It is preferable, where possible, that tutoring takes place in open spaces.

## **Physical Contact**

AISD does not seek to create a climate of fear by banning all physical contact between staff and students. However, the following guidelines need to be considered:

- Contact between adult and child must be appropriate and in the best interest of the child. For example, it is acceptable for a teacher to high five a child as a greeting or as recognition of an achievement, to provide a pat on the back as encouragement, or to comfort a distressed child with a hug as long as the child is in agreement. In the case of a hug, this should occur in full view of other adults present and not in private.

- It is also acceptable to touch a student in order to administer first aid. In this case, it is preferable to do so in the presence of another adult when this option is available. There is no doubt that the medical safety and welfare of the student take precedence over all else.
- There are times, within the teaching context (for example, but not limited to, PE, theatre, music, aquatics) when some physical contact may be required to assist with a particular movement. This should be done with the agreement of the student as well as paying attention to the fact that any physical contact or touching is done in a professional manner, and not near the student's private areas.
- Touching in the above circumstances should only occur when other students or staff are present and/or in physical spaces that are clearly observable at all times. If touch can be replaced by verbal instructions, verbal instructions are preferable.
- Physical contact with a student to gratify the needs of an adult is not acceptable. For example, an adult who is feeling lonely or sad and in need of a hug must not seek to meet their needs for comfort from a student.
- Any physical contact that is intended to cause pain or distress to a student, for example physical punishment, is unacceptable.
- Roughhousing, tickling, and wrestling between a staff member and a student is prohibited.
- Any physical contact that is initiated against the will of the student is unacceptable and prohibited.
- Any touching that appears to have a sexual connotation or purpose is unacceptable. Touching of a student on their breasts, buttocks, or genitals will be viewed as sexual abuse. Touching a student's intimate clothing such as underwear is inappropriate.
- Any unnecessary physical assistance with tasks based on the age, stage, or physical abilities of a student, for example assisting with toileting or showering when not required, is prohibited.
- Physical restraint of a student is not acceptable, except as a last resort when all other measures have failed and there is an immediate risk of harm to that child or other people in the vicinity. Ideally, another adult would be present.

## **Supervision of Students**

Appropriate supervision of students is central to creating a safe environment. Adequate adult supervision helps to prevent inadvertent or intentional harm to children from adults. Peer to peer abuse and bullying can also be prevented by monitoring the activities of children and by providing guidance, limits, support, and counsel to children and young people.

- Students in grades 9 through 12 can be on campus up until 8pm supervised minimally by security guards. Students in grades 6 through 8 can be on campus minimally supervised by security until 5:00 on school days. Elementary students need to be supervised by a parent outside of school hours.
- The school must ensure that no student is left behind on the premises or at any event off-site. Adequate supervision must be provided until the student's parent/guardian/caregiver or other authorized adult collects the child.
- The school must ensure that only authorized people may collect an elementary student from school during school hours.

## Transporting Students

- It is advisable that staff should decline all invitations to travel in cars with students.
- The transportation of students by staff to or from an activity in a private vehicle is strongly discouraged.
- It is recognized that it is not practical to prohibit it and that, from time to time, school staff may be required to transport children in their own vehicle. In this instance, the staff's supervisor and the child's guardian must be notified.
- The school strongly discourages staff from being alone in a vehicle with a student. It is recommended that when adults transport students, another school representative or adult should be present. This action is designed to protect both the child and the adult.
- Only in the case of an emergency, when all other possible options have been explored and a second adult is not available, are adults permitted to transport students alone in a vehicle. When this occurs it needs to be communicated to the parent and to the immediate supervisor before the journey takes place.
- In the case whereby the school hires a bus company to take students on an activity, care needs to be taken to ensure that a student should not be left alone with the bus driver or any other unscreened, unsupervised third party.
- **Exceptions:** The school acknowledges that the expatriate community is a relatively small community and there will be occasions when adults employed at the school have multiple connections to a particular student. For example, the student may be a friend of the adult's own child or the adult may be friends with the child's family. In these situations the adults are expected to use their best judgement in regards to child protection.

## Sleeping Arrangements and Privacy When on Field Trips

From time to time, staff may be required to accompany students on trips, including, for example, *Discovery Week* and sporting matches away from home. When away on field trips with students, staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times.

When arranging sleeping configurations, the following must be adhered to:

- Students have a right to feel safe and protected at all times. It is the responsibility of staff that students have sleeping arrangements that do not compromise their safety.
- It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that students are not left in the care of unauthorized persons.
- Students need to be provided with privacy when bathing and dressing, when at all possible, and students should not be exposed to adult nudity.
- Students should only share rooms or bedrooms with children of the same gender.
- When traveling away from home, students should have the contact details of the responsible staff member with them at all times.
- Students should have the right to contact their parent or guardian if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or distressed at any time while away from home. The group leader will make the final decision on this and may consult with the school.
- If students express or report any fear for their safety, allegation of abuse, or discomfort in relation to their safety away from home, immediate steps must be taken to remove them from the location and follow procedures according to this manual.
- At no time should a teacher be alone with a student in a hotel room with the door closed. When room checks are made, there should be two adults.

## **Use of Alcohol or Drugs**

The supply of alcohol or drugs (including tobacco and e-cigarettes) to children is prohibited and will be treated as such.

- Adults must not be under the influence of illegal drugs when responsible for the supervision of students on-site or off-site of the school.
- Adults must not be impaired or incapacitated by any legal drug when responsible for students at the school on-site or off-site.
- Medication may be administered by staff to students only with written permission and instructions from the child's parents or guardian.
- No adult should transport a student while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Boundaries of Role**

- Adults employed (or volunteering) at the school must abide by the position descriptions of their role.
- If a student asks a staff member to keep a secret, the adult must explain that they cannot promise to do so.
- If adults identify that a young person requires assistance with a matter that is outside the scope of their prescribed role, they must refer the matter to a school counselor, principal, or immediate supervisor.
- Staff should not have any ongoing, unofficial contact with students outside of school hours without parent/guardian awareness.

## **Photographing of Students at AISD**

Annually, the admissions office will ask parents to sign a statement that they have read and accept the parent admissions and re-enrollment contract. This student application includes a section giving AISD permission to photograph and publish photographs of students in authorized publications, including both digital and print media, unless a parent has specifically submitted in writing a request to the Communications Office that their child not be photographed. This permission will extend only to publications authorized by the Communications Office. Pictures may be taken at school events; however, please do not use any information that may identify the people in the photos. We also ask that you do not list the dates or locations of current or upcoming events. At no time should any member of the faculty or staff publish photographs of the faces of students participating in school sponsored events in personal publications. Similarly, student names should never be published outside the school community with student photographs.

## **Electronic Communication**

Perpetrators of child abuse sometimes use social media or other forms of electronic communication to secretly groom children for the purposes of sexual abuse or to enact forms of sexual abuse (e.g., exposure to pornography or photographing the child in forms of undress). For this reason, AISD requires that when staff and volunteers are using any electronic communication, it must be related to school matters only. For example, emails to students must be related to school matters and only be sent from a staff member's school email account. The use of social media when interacting with a student should not be for recreational purposes.



It is clear at the time of writing this policy that technology will continue to expand, and that AISD will be required to review this section for relevance and risk to children on an ongoing basis as the environment changes and risks to children become apparent.

### **Locker Room/Bathroom Facilities**

The right to a child's privacy must be balanced with their need for safety and protection. Therefore school staff are required to use their discretion based on the age, developmental stage, and needs of the student. There may be some circumstances where a student due to their age (e.g., under 5 years old) or ability (e.g., a disabled student) needs assistance with changing, but listed below are general principles that need to be adhered to:

- School staff are not to be in one-to-one situations with a student (who is not their own child) when changing in an open area in the locker room or bathroom.
- School staff are discouraged from dressing or undressing in an open area of a locker room or bathroom, and they should change within an individual stall.
- Male coaches, or other male staff members, must not enter female locker rooms or bathrooms and female coaches, and other female staff members must not enter male locker rooms or bathrooms. Exceptions are in the case of an emergency or when unoccupied.
- Staff members should ensure that no photography of students occurs in locker rooms or bathrooms.

### **Gift Giving and Favoritism**

- Staff members should refrain from showing favoritism towards any particular student. Giving of small gifts to students may be culturally appropriate at times; however, staff should avoid a pattern of gift-giving to particular students.
- Favoritism behaviors could be interpreted as an adult attempting to groom a student. Patterns of gift-giving, special favors, or other actions that exhibit favoritism should be avoided.

### **Discipline**

The school strives to create a safe and positive environment for all participants at all times. At times, students will need behavioral limits imposed. This ensures the safety of all in attendance, including adults.

The guidelines regarding discipline are as follows:

- Acceptable and unacceptable behavior must be outlined and defined to students in a clear and respectful way. Please see *AISD's Divisional Parent/Student Handbooks*. ([HS Handbook](#), [MS Handbook](#), and [ES Handbook](#))
- Students who do not adhere to acceptable behavioral guidelines, which are to be respectful to their peers and adults, need to be given an opportunity to correct any misbehavior.
- Adults must only discipline students in a way that is fair, respectful, and appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child and takes into account the child's ability and the degree of severity of the misbehavior.
- Consequences for the continuation of inappropriate or dangerous behavior must be explained to the student.
- Under no circumstances, may adults engage in any behavior toward a student that is demeaning, degrading, cruel, frightening, or aggressive.
- Under no circumstances, may adults punish a student in a manner that is physical in nature.

- If a student does not comply with the instructions of the staff member, after clear and appropriate direction and clarification, incidents could result in detention/loss of privileges. If inappropriate behavior continues, incidents could result in detention/loss of privilege, parent conferences. In aggravated or repeated cases, suspension and/or expulsion may occur.

### **Use of Language and Tone of Voice**

When communicating with students, staff need to observe the following guidelines:

- Language should be clear, encouraging, and aimed to affirm and encourage children's learning and well-being.
- Language that is harmful to the development and maintenance of children's self-esteem is prohibited. Examples of prohibited language include language that is discriminatory, racist, negative, belittling, profane, sexual in nature, or intended to frighten or intimidate the child.
- Staff need to ensure that students also respect the above guidelines when communicating with their peers.

A breach of the Code of Conduct can be reported to division principals by using the *Report of Concern* form in **Appendix 1**.

# **Student's Rights**

All students expect and deserve to be safe at school. AISD is committed to protecting all of our students from harm.

All children and young people are vulnerable to abuse by adults in positions of authority, and as such, children need to feel empowered and encouraged to voice any matters of concern that arise. It requires great courage for children to report concerns, allegations, or incidents of any form of abuse. It is extremely important that AISD staff take students' concerns seriously at all times.

Empowerment of children and young people is important, but this does not imply that they are responsible for their own safety.

Students enrolled at AISD must be made aware of their rights. They need to be informed of their right to physical, emotional and psychological safety, free from harassment and abuse.

# Policy Review

The Child Protection Manual and associated procedures will be reviewed bi-annually by a committee consisting of the counselors and leadership team.

The purpose of the review is to:

- Reflect any significant experiences in the past year in relation to this Policy.
- Reflect any changes in the operating environment, including advances in technology and/or risks to children in relation to new projects or programs, incursions, or excursions.
- Continuously review and upgrade best practices.
- The report, along with any changes recommended by this committee, should be submitted in writing to the administration for consideration.
- Any proposed changes will need to be reviewed and ratified by the administration and Board of Trustees before being implemented.

# **Appendix**

The following items are included in the appendix:

- Incident Form (Report of Concern): Appendix 1
- Reference Check Questions: Appendix 2
- Staff Commitment to Child Protection: Appendix 3
- Citations and Acknowledgements: Appendix 4

# AISD Incident Form / Report of Concern

All AISD employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect should be made to the counselor or immediate supervisor within 24 hours for immediate response. The counselor will complete this form with input from staff member.

## **Section 1:**

### **Report Information**

1. Name of person disclosing the incident:
2. Date of Report:
3. Name of person(s) completing the report:
4. Date, Time, and Location of the incident/observation:
5. Name of student/individual:

### **Details of Concern**

Concerns or alerts may be as a result of:

- Observed behavior in a child (physical, emotional, change in behavior)
- Hearsay (third party disclosure)
- Disclosure (specific report made by a student directly or via a trusted adult)
- Observed behavior in an adult (breach of Code of Conduct)
- A report of historical abuse/incident

6. Provide full factual details only.

7. State whether you witnessed the incident or if it was reported to you.

8. If there was any conversation with the child, report his/her own words as closely as possible.

9. List indicators of abuse or injuries (if applicable)

Follow up action (if any, by the reporter): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate follow up by the Counselor after receiving the report orally or in writing:  
Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Counselor Informed the Principal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal Signature:

Principal Informed the Superintendent Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Superintendent Signature

Any follow-up:

**Section 2:**

**Student's Family/Guardian**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Was the family contacted in relation to this report? Y / N If no, explain:

If yes, detail any discussion with the family in relation to this report:

**Section 3:**

**Action Taken**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken to ensure the child's safety:

Action taken to support the needs of the student and the family (where required):

Action taken to address the support needs of staff, volunteers, or other students who witnessed the incident:

Any future action to be undertaken:

Other details/follow up:

**Section 4:**

**Report to any External Authorities (e.g. Diplomatic Missions or Employers)**

Was any information shared with an external authority? YES NO

If yes, fill out the following:

Name of external authority:

Date and time of notification:

Name and position of person reported to:

AIISD representative(s):

Signature(s):

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Were other authorities notified? YES / NO If yes, provide details:

Organizational Representative(s):

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Section 5:**

**Action Taken in the Case of Historical Abuse**

Outline the wishes of the person making the report:

Outline the school response:

School representative(s):

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Reference Checks**

Note: These questions are designed as a guide and are not prescriptive. Select a few you wish to ask in addition to other questions of relevance relating to the role.

### **Information about the nature of the relationship between the applicant and the referee**

- How long have you known the applicant?
- What was your relationship to the applicant during the time you worked together?
- Is your relationship of a personal or professional nature?
- What was the nature of the work that the applicant undertook in your organizational context?

### **Verification of information in resume and information provided at interview point.**

- What was the applicant's position title in your organization?
- Dates they were employed in the organization?
- Main duties and responsibilities?
- Assessment of their performance in that role?

- Weaknesses and strengths you observed?
- Willingness to seek consult with manager or someone above them in the hierarchy and seek assistance in challenging situations?
- Team player?

**Sample questions relating to applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.**

- What experience does the applicant have in working with children and young people, e.g. length of time they worked with children, age range of children, skills and abilities of children?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children in.....[describe the context of the role they have applied for]?
- Are you comfortable in knowing that at times the applicant may be working alone (as the sole adult) with children?
- How would you describe the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in relation to working with children and young people?
- In your opinion, are there any challenges that the applicant would face in working with or engaging with children?

- Are there any age groups he/she may not be suited to work with? If yes, why?
- Does the applicant use appropriate language when communicating with children?
- Have you observed the applicant disciplining a child for misbehavior? If yes, please describe the scenario and the appropriateness of the discipline in this context.
- Can you tell me about a situation when the applicant had to handle a child who was angry and lashing out physically? Was distressed and required comforting? Was uncooperative and refused to participate?
- How did the applicant relate to the children/young people's parents in the context of their work?
- Does the applicant become angry easily?
- How does the applicant deal with pressure?
- How does the applicant deal with a child/young person/staff member/parent who is demanding? Can you give an example?
- Do you know of any instances when the applicant has demonstrated any inappropriate physical contact with children?

- Do you know of any instances where the applicant acted outside the boundaries of their defined role?
  
- Have there been any findings against the applicant in relation to allegations of inappropriate behavior towards children or young people?
  
- Why did the applicant leave your organization?
  
- Would you be willing to re-employ the applicant in your organization or another organization?
  
- Is there anything I haven't asked which you think might be important for me to know before employing this applicant to work in a role that has contact with and responsibility for children?

## Staff Commitment to Uphold Child Protection Policy

AISD is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students. The school is committed to a system of child protection that ensures that all staff act for the welfare of each child. You must sign the following statement as part of your acceptance of our offer of a position at AISD.

I have agreed that I have read and understood the *AISD's Child Protection Policy* and commit to ensuring the safety of all children in my care at all times. I have received the Code of Conduct and will uphold its guidelines.

### Acknowledgment

I (name) \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that I agree to abide by the *AISD Child Protection Policy* and the *Code of Conduct*.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Citations and Acknowledgements**

This document was created with help from multiple sources and individuals. Kayla DuPree, Suzanne Astle, Bridget Herrera, Sheri DeNeef, and Jean Tsai created the first draft of this policy (2019).

The Child Protection Policy that the International School Yangon developed was a model we copied and acknowledge that we used portions of their policy word-for-word for our manual. We also referenced and used portions of the Child Protection at Shanghai American School created by the Shanghai American School.

Finally, administrators and counselors at AISD developed the final details with feedback from the board representative Kim Shaw and a published copy of the manual.