



THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN GENOA
SINCE 1966

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

October 2020

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The International School in Genoa recognizes its responsibility in promoting and defending the rights of children to physical, emotional and social well-being.

A. The International School in Genoa will

- Inform all adults who have contact with students at ISG of their responsibilities and obligations with regard to national law in relation to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- Ensure that any adult working within the school and is fully aware of the present policy.
- Ensure that all possible care is used when recruiting prospective staff so that adults seeking to work closely with children are suitable. All staff are required to have up to date criminal and child protection checks completed.
- Promote internet safety in education programs.
- Inform all students and their families of a child's right to live without fear of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- Ensure that all staff are Child Protection trained to international standards, and that best practice is understood and applied by staff.
- Ensure respect of the rights of child victims and their families as well those of any person accused of failing to adhere to the rights of the child.
- Ensure that a designated group is responsible to handle any case or suspicion brought to its attention. The Designated Group will be composed of the Director, relevant Principal and school guidance counsellor, and any other person identified by the group as appropriate. The members of the group are required to maintain complete confidentiality.
- Documentation relating to every case brought forward shall be kept on record with the Director and must be considered and handled as strictly confidential.

- Ensure the application of procedures is in conformity with national rulings.
- The Director of the school is responsible for the implementation of the present policy and related policies.

B. The aims of the policy are

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including overseas police checks where necessary.

C. General procedures

Every school year full information shall be distributed to all persons working within the school concerning:

- The existence of this policy;
- The obligation to report;
- Definitions of abuse;
- The existence of the designated group and its function;
- The procedure to be followed by members of staff in all areas covered by this policy.

D. Annual procedures

- Students of all ages shall be taught about their rights. They shall be made aware, in an age-appropriate manner, of issues associated with their safety and how to stay safe.
- Parents will be made aware of the existence of this policy.

E. Definitions

The following specific definitions apply:

- **Physical abuse:** Any action that results in deliberately hurting a child, which could cause injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts, including corporal punishment.
- **Emotional abuse:** Anything that causes significant and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development such as bullying, belittling, making them feel worthless or unloved.
- **Sexual abuse:** When a child is forced or persuaded to take part in, or witness, sexual activities. This does not have to be physical contact and it can happen on-line.
- **Neglect:** The persistent failure to ensure that a child's basic physical, mental and/or psychological needs are met (lack of food, "home alone", delayed or denied medical attention, etc.).

F. Procedures for handling disclosures to staff by students

- Any suspicion or knowledge of a child in danger must be reported to a member of the designated group.
- Disclosures about a student may come from other students or a parent.
- It is important that students feel that they can approach staff members if they find themselves in difficult situations. However, it is essential that staff are aware of and make the distinction between gathering information and investigating. An initial disclosure should be handled as follows:
 - Encourage the child who is confiding this information to feel free to speak to the adult concerned in an atmosphere of trust and confidence;
 - Gather as much information as possible by asking only open-ended questions;
 - Inform the child that the adult's responsibility is to inform a member of the designated team;
 - Avoid making a judgment, control his/her emotion and handle the matter with the utmost discretion, respecting the rights of all the individuals involved to preserve confidentiality;
 - Consider whether the child's immediate safety is at risk;
 - Write down as soon as possible those acts which have aroused suspicions, though without interpreting them, and noting what was said or observed, using the child's words as far as possible, and sign the statement;
 - Pass on everything that is learned as soon as possible to a member of the designated team who will be responsible for rapidly putting into action the procedure of the policy, then step back;

- Having contacted the member of staff designated to handle the child protection issues in the school, refrain from being a confidant to the student unless approved by the designated group;
- Refrain from disclosing what has been learned to others.

G. Meeting of the designated group

- The member of the designated group who has been contacted by the reporting individual shall immediately inform the Director of the school, who will convene a meeting of the group.
- The group will meet immediately to manage the case in a coordinated way, including a review of all relevant school policies to ensure they are being followed, consideration of all background information that may be related to the case, appointment of one person to be responsible for the case management, to open and maintain a file on the case and be the single point of contact between concerned parties, ensure it guides any staff member to whom a disclosure has been made as per the recommendations (above), consider the school's response from the point of view of pastoral and academic support.
- It is not the responsibility of the designated group to carry out investigations and interrogations. Procedures of this kind remain the responsibility of the local authorities.
- The group will promptly seek the guidance of the local authorities when considering appropriate action to be taken, especially in cases where it is considered that a child is at risk.

In any case of a child in danger or belief that a child is in danger, the group will immediately draw up and submit the report to the local authorities and ensure respect for the procedure defined for the school.

It is the duty of the Director to contact the authorities for information concerning the evolution of the case.

H. Communication

With the family: the designated group shall choose an appropriate occasion to make contact with the parents to inform them of the report, and shall comply with the advice of the competent authorities on what communication is felt to be appropriate.

With members of the school community: subject to professional advice, the identity of the child in danger or that of the alleged perpetrator of the offence should not be made known to other staff members or other students in order to respect the right to privacy of the concerned parties.

I. Additional procedures if the alleged or suspected offender is a staff member

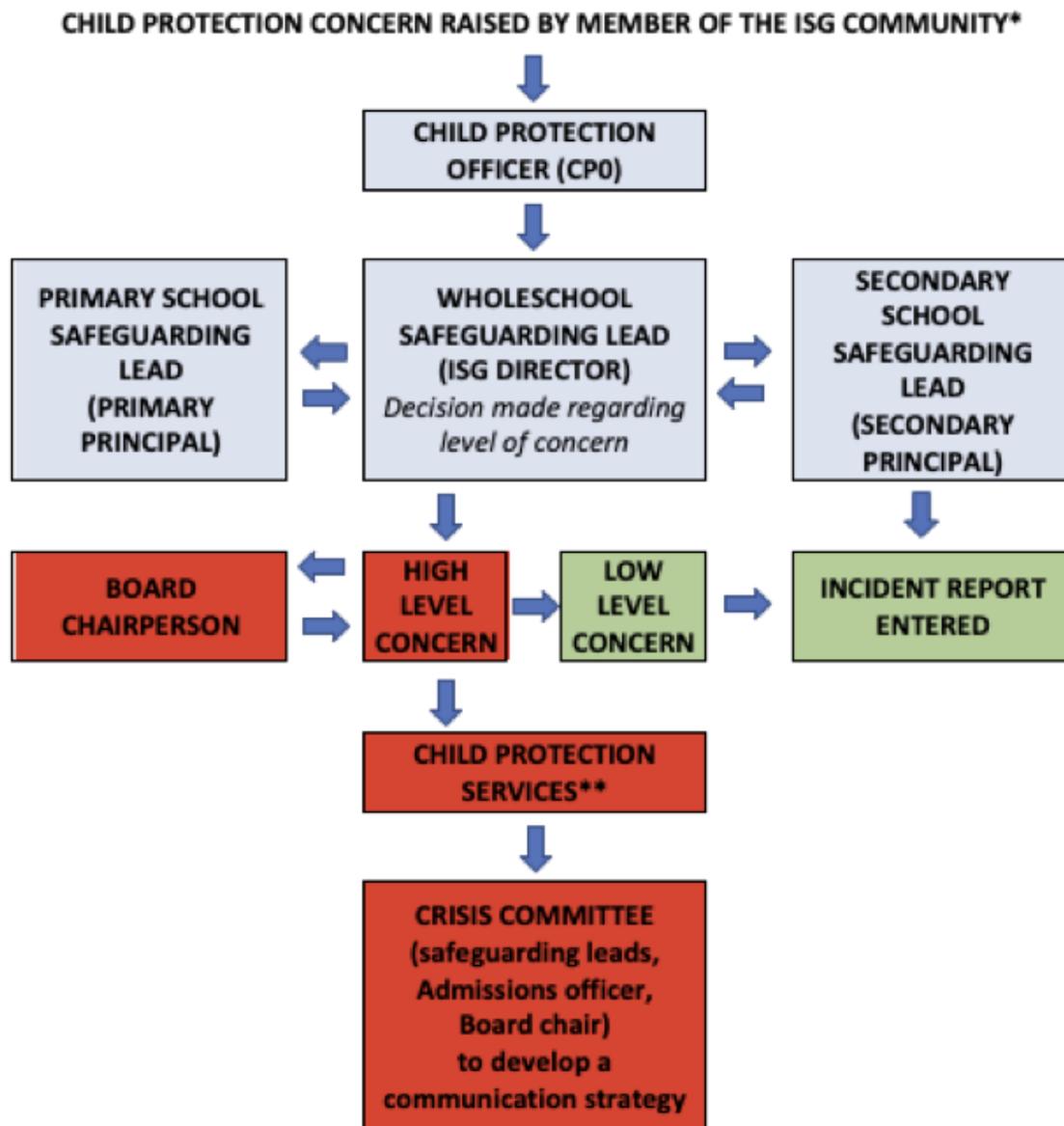
- The Director will be immediately informed of the case. No contact shall be made with the employee in question. It is the duty of the Director to apply strictly those measures required by the local authorities in order to guarantee the safety of the students, to ensure the rights of both the victim and the alleged offender are respected and to avoid the destruction of any evidence; every care should be taken not to be judgmental while a full enquiry is conducted to handle the matter with appropriate discretion.
- If necessary, the Director shall inform colleagues that an enquiry has been opened and the presumption of innocence holds good.
- Once the matter has been reported to the local authorities by means of a formal complaint, the employee concerned may be suspended as a precautionary measure: in this case, any suspension of the employee concerned must be made in strict compliance with all the rules applicable to the employment relationship, and, the Director shall inform the parents of the victim about the measures taken by the school in relation to the matter. Once this has been done the school shall make no further official reference to the case until the end of the procedure.
- As from the moment of his/her suspension, the employee in question shall be denied access to all campuses of the school and his/her email account will be frozen. S/He will be advised not to communicate with students using other social media.
- At the end of the procedure and after decision on any appeal, the employee who is found guilty of an attack upon the integrity of a student shall be dismissed by the school.
- If the employee is found innocent, the Director shall be responsible for any matters related to his or her re-integration. All contractual rights must be respected.
- Safeguarding concerns about adults in the School should normally be made to a designated CPO. If there is a concern that the school's CPO system is failing to adequately address a situation of abuse or neglect, the issue should be brought to the attention of the School Director. Should there be serious doubt in the ability of the school's systems or the Director to adequately address a concern, it's important to note that all staff may raise concerns directly with the local authorities.

J. Additional procedures if the alleged or suspected offender is another student or are other students

- It is important to bear in mind that there may in fact be at least two victims in this instance.
- The general procedures also apply in this case, but the following measures shall be added:

- Following the advice of the Designated Group, the Director shall ensure that the parents of the students in question shall be immediately informed. If the matter has already been referred to the competent authorities, the Director will take advice from those authorities on whether, when and by whom the parents of the alleged perpetrator should be informed.
- The designated Group shall ensure that psychological follow up of the persons involved, including staff, shall be put in place where necessary.

K. Communication flow chart



*ISG Community includes all direct employees, contractors on campus, parents, guardians and host families.

**At any point that there is a concern that a report has not been dealt with adequately, child protection services can be contacted directly