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## Child Protection at Nanjing International School

Dear Parents,

Nanjing International School, in keeping with the NIS mission, is committed to Child Protection. As such, procedures have been developed to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. It is with the support of our School Board that I send this letter to parents at the beginning of each school year, reminding our community about this critical issue. The NIS Child Protection procedures are based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which China is a signatory.

We want to draw your attention to two key articles:

*Article 3* - In all actions concerning children. "...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

*Article 19 - Protection from abuse and neglect.* "...protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child."

By enrolling your child at NIS, you agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the procedures adopted by NIS. We genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of your children. As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, NIS approaches Child Protection in the following ways:

- Prevention
  - Police checks of all employees, contractors, and volunteers
  - Code of Conduct signed by all employees, contractors, and volunteers
  - Guide faculty to recognise and report issues of abuse and neglect
  - Age-appropriate education in regards to child protection
- Operational
  - NIS community members to wear their NIS identification cards
  - All visitors to sign-in and display the visitor badge
  - All visitors are made aware of the NIS Visitor Code of Conduct
  - All adults to use Adult only toilets
- Strategic
  - Put in place a Child Protection Officer and a Child Safeguarding Team

I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact your school Counselor, the relevant Head of School, or myself with any questions you may have.

Laurie McLellan  
Director

## Child Protection at NIS:

### What does Child Protection mean for the NIS community?

NIS is defining a standard for the treatment of all children and youth — that they be treated with respect and dignity at all times by adults. Guidelines regarding student-to-student safeguarding can be found in our Peer-to-Peer Safeguarding document. NIS endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the host country, China, is a signatory. As such, we 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. Child protection standards defined by NIS encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, NIS will seek all available resources to restore those rights.

### Definitions:

**Child:** At NIS we define “child” as any currently enrolled student, regardless of age.

**Physical abuse** is defined as “any non-accidental physical injury to the child” and can include, but are not limited to, striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure of a parent or other person with responsibility to meet a child’s basic physical, physiological, and/or safety needs that may result in serious impairment to the child’s health or development.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent ill treatment of a child as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child’s emotional development.

## The Role of the Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) is the first point of contact for all child protection concerns. The CPO is responsible for hearing child-abuse concerns and dealing with these by informing the Deputy Director-Learning and Director and by conducting an initial inquiry. The CPO is also a member of the Child Safeguarding Team, maintains a central database of police checks, code of conduct and staff training. The CPO reviews and updates school procedures in relation to Child Protection, trains staff and raises awareness. Additional responsibilities include: gathering and maintaining records regarding safeguarding incidents, managing the referral process, keeping parents informed, informing the Director, maintaining training of themselves and implementing procedures.

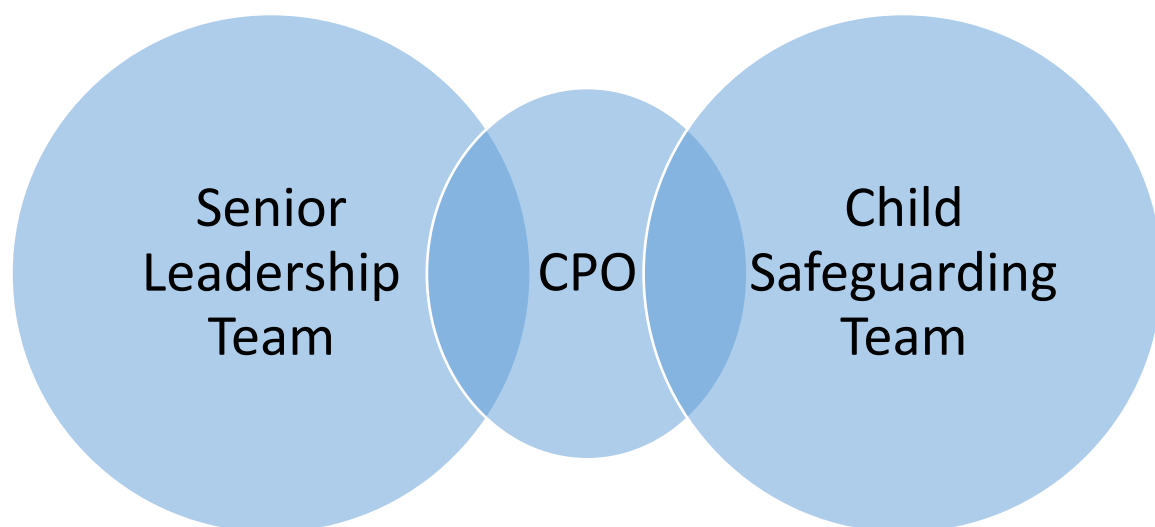
## Safeguarding Outside of School Hours

NIS seeks to keep its students safe at all times. If a student is left overnight at home without an adult it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the relevant head of section at least 24 hours before hand. Information should be provided about the length of time the parents will be away and the name and contact number of the adult who will be responsible for the safety and welfare of the students.

## Teams

**The Child Safeguarding Team** meets monthly. This team is made up of the Child Protection Officer and the Counselors. The Team focuses on staff training, student education, parent education and matters arising from the procedures that are in place. This team does not discuss individual cases.

**The Child Response Team** comes together when there is reasonable cause to follow up on a disclosure. This team is made up of a combination of relevant persons which may include: the School Director, the Deputy Director for Learning, the relevant Section Head(s), Child Protection Officer, the relevant counselor(s). Additional members may include the Deputy Director – Finance and Operations, Homeroom or Advisory teacher, the Nurse, the IT Director, and/or any other teachers deemed essential to support the response to the situation.



## Reporting Procedures

All staff employed at NIS must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible (within 24 hours), who will notify the Deputy Director - Learning and the Director. Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with NIS protocols. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities (See Appendix 1).

### Step 1

When a child reports abuse or there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring, the teacher will seek advice from the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible within 24 hours. The Child Protection Officer will inform the Deputy Director for Learning and the Director, then take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident. These may include:

- Discussions between the child and Counselor in order to gain more information
- In-class observations of the child by the Teacher, Counselor, or Leadership Team
- A record of physical evidence
- Discussion with the parents

## **Step 2**

Should there be reasonable cause, the Child Protection Officer will move to form a school-based response team as needed to address the report, and a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are as follows:

- Meetings with the family to present the school's concerns
- Referral of the student and family to internal and/or external counseling

## **Step 3**

Subsequent to a reported and/or substantiated case of child abuse, the following actions may take place:

- Provide in-school structures and guidance as appropriate to the child and family
- Provide the child's teachers with ongoing support
- Provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use in support of the child
- Maintain contact with outside therapists regarding support for the child
- Notification to the sponsoring employer of the family.
- Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
- Consultation with the school's attorney.
- Consultation with local authorities.

## **Confidentiality**

In all cases, steps taken will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. All documentation of the investigation will be kept in a confidential and locked records file in school. Records sent to schools to which a student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. NIS will make every attempt to share this information in a way that will protect the child.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of NIS, the Director and Board Chair will follow Board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Nanjing International School Code of Conduct.

## **In developing this document, NIS thanks the following individuals and organizations:**

Association of International Schools in Africa. (2016). *AISA Child Protection Handbook*. Nairobi, KE.

Council of International Schools. (2018). *Managing Child Abuse Allegations*. Lieden, NL: Smellie, et al.

Douglas Walker, CIS Affiliated Consultant at NIS. (2016)

Shanghai American School. (2016). SAS Child Protection Policy. Shanghai, CN.

**NIS Child Protection Procedure Flowchart (Appendix 1)**

