



LINCOLN

**CHILD PROTECTION
AT
ASOCIACIÓN ESCUELAS LINCOLN**

POLICY & HANDBOOK

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

As protectors of children, schools fill a special institutional role in society. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care grow and develop in a safe and secure environment. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify those who are in need of help and protection. When a child needs help and protection, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to follow reporting protocol so that children receive the support and assistance they may require and families may obtain services that will remedy situations posing a threat to the child's welfare, including physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and neglect.

As per the World Health Organization: *“Child maltreatment is defined as: all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”*

Child abuse and neglect are violations of human rights and are harmful to the child's education, as well as to his or her physical, emotional, and social development. Types of neglect include physical, environmental, emotional, and educational neglect, as well as inadequate supervision. If employees at the Asociación Escuelas Lincoln (AEL) suspect that a child at the school has been abused or neglected, employees must immediately make a report to the Principal or School Counselor. Reporting and follow-up of all suspected incidents of this nature will proceed in accordance with administrative procedures respective to this policy, keeping the safety of the child as the highest priority. Furthermore, such cases may be reported to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, to the employer of parents or guardians about whom there are concerns, and/or to local authorities. The School shall not hold any school employee at fault for making a report of abuse or neglect, based on good faith, that is later judged to be false or when further investigation is deemed unnecessary.

AEL seeks to be a safe haven for all members of our community. We feel a particular responsibility to protect children from child abuse and neglect. To meet this responsibility, AEL will implement educational programs for students and employees regarding personal safety, child abuse and neglect, and appropriate adult conduct with children. Furthermore, the school will implement and regularly review procedures, including hiring, security and training practices, to ensure the safety of the children in its care. The Administration shall communicate this policy, appropriate guidelines and educational resources to students, employees, parents, and parents of applicants.

Adapted from AES and approved by the Board of Directors February 2015

OUR BELIEFS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a school we understand that self-esteem, confidence, caring friendships and open and clear lines of communication with a trustworthy adult help prevent abuse. Therefore, our school will:

- Establish and sustain an environment in which students feel safe, heard and listened to.
- Ensure that all students are aware that there are adults in school to whom they may approach with worries or in difficult situations of any sort.
- Include activities and opportunities within the curriculum to give students the proper resources in keeping safe from any type of abuse.
- Train faculty and staff in recognizing and giving support in abuse or negligence situations.

In pursuit of a safe and supportive environment, the school will work together with parents/guardians to ensure that all children are safe and aware of their rights and responsibilities, as those of others.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All adults have the responsibility to protect the students, whether they work directly or indirectly with them. The administration will be responsible of ensuring that the school follows secure procedures of hiring. These procedures will include, physical and psychological evaluations, background checks and police reports for all employees that are in contact with students.

PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is a term that must be understood, especially in regards to child protection, by all those working with children. The sole purpose of confidentiality in this aspect is in benefit of the child. An employee must never guarantee confidentiality to a student or agree on keeping a secret, since there are established procedures to follow when there is a true preoccupation regarding child protection, which include informing the issue to a committee.

Employees will be given relevant information of individual child protection cases only when necessary. Any information shared with an employee must be kept in strict confidentiality.

INFORMING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD MALTREATMENT SITUATIONS

Parents, guardians, teachers, assistants and/or administrative employees, are obliged to inform the division Principal or Counselor of any maltreatment incident (physical, sexual or psychological) as soon as they become aware of it.

Students are encouraged to act with responsibility when faced with incidents of physical, psychological or any type of abuse in which themselves or others may be victims. Students can inform either verbally or in writing to the Principal or the adult of their choice, who will inform the Principal so that they may proceed accordingly.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN RISK

The school will support students by the following actions:

- A curriculum that promotes self-esteem and self-motivation.
- School values that promote a positive, supportive and safe environment which provides students and adults a feeling of respect, value and commitment.
- A consistent focus that ensures students are aware that some behaviors are unacceptable, but they are still valued.
- A commitment to develop productive relationships and of support for parents/guardians, provided that it is always for the child's well-being.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT DEFINED

DEFINITION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

“Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment.” *World Health Organization*

TYPES OF MALTREATMENT/ABUSE

There are various child maltreatment classifications around diverse situations. Beyond some differences, in general terms, all types include the following typology:

Physical maltreatment: The physical abuse of children includes any non-accidental physical injury caused by the child’s caretaker. Physical abuse can vary greatly in frequency and severity. It may include injuries sustained from burning, beating, kicking, or punching. Although the injury is not an accident, neither is it necessarily the intent of the child’s caretaker to injure the child. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is inappropriate to the child’s age, developmental level, or condition. Additionally, it may be caused by a parent’s recurrent lapses in self-control that are brought on by immaturity, stress, or the use of alcohol or illicit drugs. Caretakers may physically abuse children during discipline or as a way to “teach the child a lesson.”

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse is defined as adult sexual behavior with a child. It can include fondling a child’s genitals, making the child fondle the adult’s genitals, digital penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, sexual exploitation, or exposure to pornography. Sexual abuse also may be committed by a person younger than age 18. This occurs when that person is significantly older than the victim or is in a position of power or control over the child, such as an older youth babysitting a child or a sibling. Sexual abuse may take place within the family (referred to as incest), by a parent’s boyfriend or girlfriend, by a caretaker outside the family (e.g., family friend, babysitter), or by a stranger. Contrary to the myth of abuse by strangers, however, sexually abused children usually know their abusers and have some form of a relationship with them. Child sexual abuse can come to the attention of authorities in a number of ways. The child might disclose the abuse to the authorities, to another adult, or to a child, or may display abnormal behaviors (e.g., inappropriate sexual behaviors, such as constantly rubbing the genital area). Additionally, the child may have unexplained injuries or other medical conditions that could be caused by sexual abuse

Psychological or emotional maltreatment: Psychological maltreatment by a caretaker includes blaming, belittling, or rejecting a child; constantly treating siblings unequally; and demonstrating a persistent lack of concern for the child’s welfare. It often accompanies physical abuse. The five categories of psychological maltreatment are:

- Spurning (e.g., belittling, ridiculing)
- Terrorizing (e.g., threatening)
- Isolating (e.g., confining the child from any family or friends)
- Exploiting or corrupting (e.g., encouraging or permitting prostitution or substance abuse)
- Denying emotional responsiveness (e.g., failing to express or to show affection).

Psychological maltreatment often causes behavior problems in children and, in some cases, may cause developmental lags, psychosomatic symptoms (i.e., bodily symptoms caused by a mental or emotional disturbance), and other effects, such as speech disorders. First responders may not detect the physical or behavioral signs of psychological maltreatment easily.

Munchausen Syndrome by proxy: Munchausen syndrome is a mental disorder that causes a person with a deep-seated need for attention to fake sickness or injury. Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSP) is a disorder in which the caretaker of a child either makes up fake symptoms or causes real symptoms to make it appear as though the child is injured or ill. The term “by proxy” means “through a substitute.” Though MSP is primarily a mental illness, it’s also considered a form of child abuse.

Many people with MSP exaggerate or lie about a child’s symptoms to get attention. They may also create symptoms by poisoning food, withholding food, or causing an infection. Some people may even have a child undergo painful or risky tests and procedures to try to gain sympathy from their family members or community. It’s also believed that people with MSP may enjoy the satisfaction of deceiving people whom they perceive to be more powerful than themselves, particularly medical professionals.

Neglect: Neglect involves a caregiver’s failure to meet the basic needs of a child, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision. Types of neglect include physical, environmental, emotional, and educational neglect, as well as inadequate supervision. Neglect follows a continuum from mild to severe and often is very difficult to define. Most laws today include some mention of “failure or inability to provide” in their definitions. There is still a lack of consensus, however, as to what constitutes failure to provide adequate food, shelter, protection, or clothing. Some State definitions include “failure or inability to protect,” which refers to a situation in which a child is exposed to someone who may harm him, such as being left with a parent’s drug dealer or a known child molester. In addition, parents might be accused of failing to provide a safe environment by not protecting a child from unsanitary or hazardous living conditions. Caregivers may not provide proper care for a variety of reasons, including a lack of knowledge or understanding about meeting the child’s needs, inadequate bonding with the child, or impairment due to substance abuse or to mental illness. Although there are cases of co-occurring maltreatment and poverty, living in poverty, in and of itself, does not mean that a child is being neglected.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse or neglect. Together with other indicators, such as family dynamics, they may warrant a referral.

POSSIBLE PHYSICAL MALTREATMENT/ABUSE INDICATORS

- 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
- Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures

POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE INDICATORS

- Expressions of age-inappropriate knowledge of sex and sexually
- “pseudo-mature” behaviors
- Sexually explicit drawings
- Highly sexualized play or risky sexual behavior
- Avoiding or attempting to avoid a familiar adult or place
- Self-destructive behavior
- Nightmares, sleep interruptions
- Not wanting to change into PE clothes or be in locker-rooms with others
- Withdrawn behavior
- Inappropriate boundaries with authority figures

POSSIBLE EMOTIONAL ABUSE INDICATORS

- Pronounced anxiety at the thought of home/school communication
- Student acts as a barrier between home and school communication
- Seems especially anxious around authority figures
- Withdrawn and tries to appear invisible
- Parent contact during which a parent is very negative about their child
- Loss of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Social withdrawal
- Depression
- Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
- Desperately seeks affection

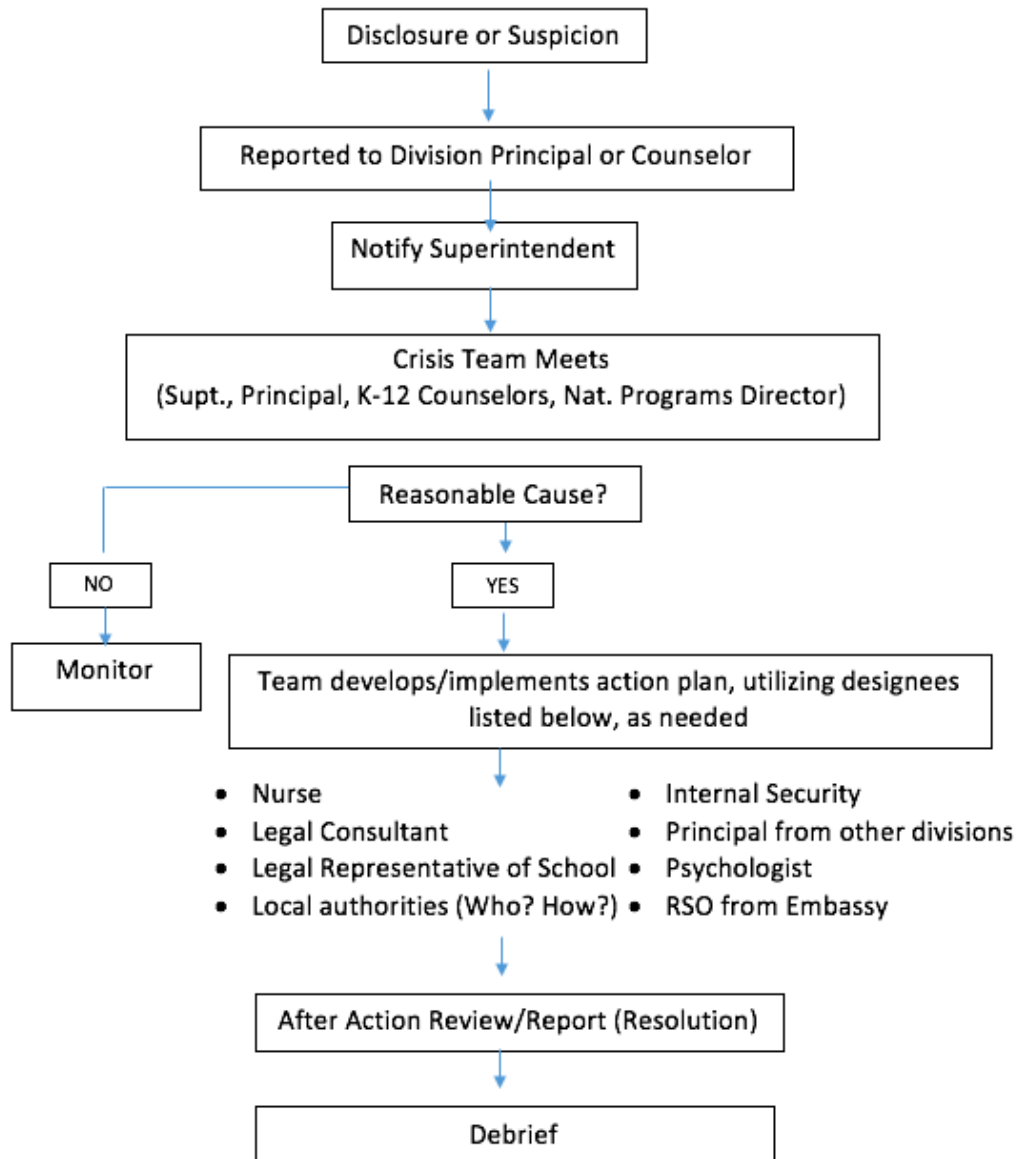
POSSIBLE NEGLECT INDICATORS

- 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
- Child has medical condition which seems to go untreated
- Child is unable to tell you who is caring for them if parents are away
- Parents cannot be reached in the case of an emergency

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ABUSE OR NEGLECT IS REPORTED?

When there is cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the counselor, or principal. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the superintendent of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

All staff, faculty and administrators are mandated to report incidences of abuse and neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made the counselor as soon as possible, and in no more than 24 hours. Below is the flowchart which shows how the report will be taken forward.



PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT

A report must be made when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. All reports are confidential and only those involved to assist the child and family will be notified.

Staff must report to a counselor or principal as soon as possible after the suspicion has arisen. The report to the counselor or principal must be made within 24 hours. The counselor and/or principal will then use the reporting form below to work with the reporter and then follow-up accordingly, following the information and procedural flow as indicated on the flowchart.



LINCOLN

AEL SCHOOL REPORTING FORM FOR CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

A mandatory report of sexual abuse must be completed by the reporter. Reports of all other forms of abuse may be completed by the reporter or the principal on their behalf. This report should be submitted to the division counselor or principal.

1. REPORTER'S DETAILS (*fields that must be completed)

*Reporter's Name			
*Workplace address			
or *Other Address for response to report			
Contact Phone Number			
Is this a written report following a telephone report?	No Yes	Date of report:	Time of report:

2. DETAILS ABOUT THE CHILD (If more than one child is involved, record their names in section 5.)

*Child's first name (or description of child if name unknown)			
*Child's last name			
Date of birth		Or estimated age of child	
Gender	Male Female	Disability?	
Full Address			
Home Phone		Mobile	
Current residence of the child/young person if different from above			
School/pre-school attended or child care service or arrangement (family day care/nanny etc., if known)			

3. NAME OF PARENT/CARER/OTHER PROVIDING CARE (if known)

First Name	
Last Name	
Address (if different from above)	
Phone (if different from above)	
Relationship to child/young person (if known)	
Significant others close to the child and/or family (e.g. Grandparents/aunts/uncles)	

4. PERSON BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE FOR ALLEGED ABUSE OR HARM (if known)

First Name	
Last Name	
Full Address	
Phone	
Mobile	
Relationship to child/youth (if known)	
Do you know if this person is known to Police?	No Yes

5. DETAILED REPORT

Provide details of the grounds for your belief that a child has been the subject of sexual, physical, emotional/psychological abuse or neglect.

Reporter's signature

Principal's signature