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Safeguarding Code of Conduct During Distance Learning

The Council of International Schools (CIS) in consultation with the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), Childnet International, the International School Counseling Association (ISCA), International Child Protection Advisors (ICPA) and 9ine have outlined some guidelines in how to keep students safe and protect their well-being as schools adapt to new distance/virtual learning environments.

The Child Safeguarding Team of AEL (Leadership Team, HR, Counselors, AEL Lawyer, Technology Team, and Nurses) has reviewed these considerations in preparing the Code of Conduct for Distance learning for any staff member in contact with students.

The term 'safeguarding' is used to describe actions that a school can take to prevent, identify and respond to the harm and abuse of students.

What are the key safeguarding risks to our students during this time?

The safeguarding risks associated with virtual and remote learning are similar to those associated with in-person learning. These include peer on peer harm, which is the physical, emotional or sexual harm between students and grooming and abuse by a member of staff. Most forms of harm can take place online as well as offline. In remote working environments and situations of self isolation or quarantine, online harm and harm to students living in abusive home environments are particular considerations.

Watch for Signs of Abuse during Online Learning: With many parents at home with their kids all day, every day, many parents are highly stressed. This situation could create home environments where abuse of our students could increase. Teachers are encouraged to keep a close eye on your students and their posts and report concerns about any particular student or family to your division counselor or principal. Counselors are available online for consultation.

Guidelines and Expectations for Lincoln Staff (Teachers, Counselors, Administrators)

Boundaries: Online communications can increase the blurring of boundaries and it is important that staff maintain professional boundaries at all times when conducting remote learning.

- Professional boundaries - staff should maintain the same professional boundaries with students online as they are required to maintain in person;
- Appropriate location to join a virtual classroom - a neutral location (i.e. not a bedroom or bathroom) in a common area in the house is preferable
- Appropriate dress code when joining a virtual classroom – this should mirror how one would dress normally for school;
- All correspondence with students must utilize school sponsored technologies and accounts and must not involve social media, personal emails, personal contact information, use of non-school sponsored apps, or other personal software.
- Teachers can record themselves using school learning software of their choice and share on school learning platforms if they do not include students.
- If you have safeguarding or serious concern for anyone (student, staff member, parent), contact the appropriate counselor and/or divisional administrator directly.
- Report inappropriate use of technology to divisional administration

One on One Sessions: Many teachers may be facilitating one-to-one meetings with students for instruction and support. Though holding one-to-one meetings with students for instruction and support is generous and meaningful for students, we recommend against any unnecessary individual meetings. If you are having one-to-one meetings with students, it's important to let administration and parents know so that they are aware and may drop in. Please don't record individual work with students.

Live Classes/Breakout Sessions: Many video chatting apps, like Zoom, have a breakout rooms feature that you can implement. If you have instructional assistants, ELL teachers or other colleagues, they could be in each of the breakout rooms to supervise. A surprising number of child protection issues are peer-to-peer in nature, and adult presence in breakout rooms, just like in classrooms, works to counter this. If you're not able to have another adult present, please be sure to go in and out of the virtual rooms as often as possible.

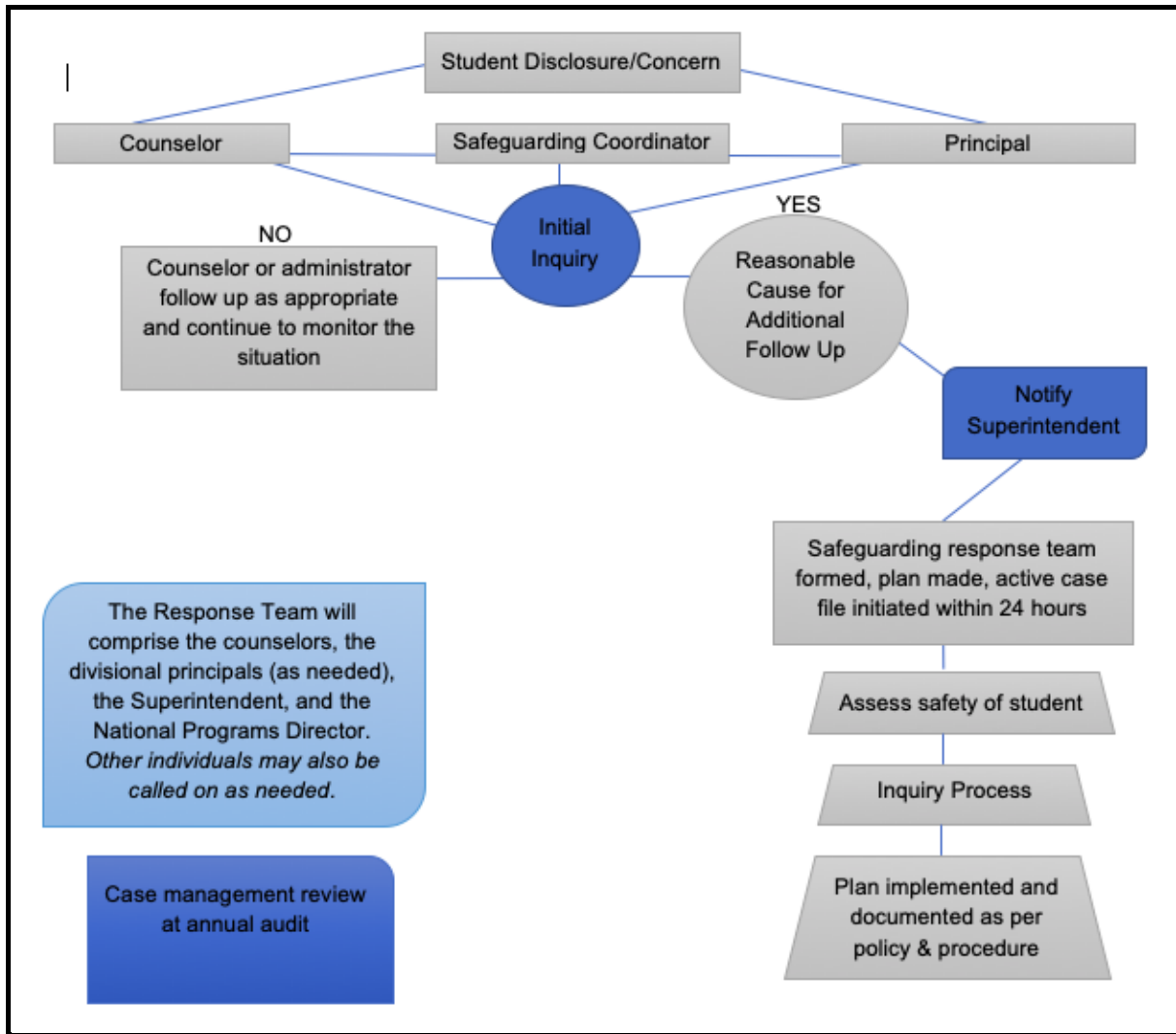
Students Unsupervised in School-Hosted Meeting Spaces: Students may be asking to stay on Zoom or other video meetings after classes to interact. This is an issue of liability and should be discouraged – just like not allowing kids to stay in the classroom after you leave at the end of the day. Please be sure that you are the last person to leave your virtual classroom to try and deter students from staying in them on their own.

Additional Guidelines for Counselors

During campus closures, school counselors should make every effort to provide continuity of services across all domains of school counseling, direct and indirect, including individual counseling, responsive services, and system support.

- Counselors should use professional judgement when deciding whether a video session with a student is appropriate.
- Adhere to the same ethical guidelines in a virtual/distance setting as school counselors in face-to-face settings.
- Implement procedures for students to follow in both emergency and nonemergency situations when the school counselor is not available.
- Recognize and mitigate the limitation of virtual/distance school counseling confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients. Take steps to ensure confidentiality and be mindful of your location.
- Educate students on how to participate in the electronic school counseling relationship to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur due to lack of verbal cues and inability to read body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and school counseling relationship.
- Online sessions should be documented as such in counselor notes.
- Provide counseling to students in a brief context and support students and families/guardians in obtaining outside services if the student needs long-term clinical counseling.
- Middle and High School Counselors may consider having a parent present at the start and end of each session and ask that they stay nearby in case the student needs support.
- Elementary School Counselor requests that the parent be present during individual sessions.
- Ensure a safety plan is in place for students at risk of significant or immediate harm that involves the following:
 - The student can identify warning signs, coping strategies, identifying trusted adults/friends whom the student can ask for help within their current locale.
 - The counselor has readily available contact information of professionals whom they can refer students and families to in the event of an emergency. If the student is located in a different city from school, the counselor may connect with colleagues located in that city via the [ISCA Member Directory](#).
 - Monitoring student safety through regular virtual appointments.
- School counselors should seek consultation and supervision from other school counselors and other professionals when ethical and professional questions arise.

Flowchart for Reporting



The following resources were used to develop this document:

- [International School Counselor Association \(ISCA\) Position Statement](#), March 11, 2020
- [Safeguarding Implications for Online Learning](#), Council of International Schools
- [International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children \(ICMEC\)](#)