



THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PORT OF SPAIN

ISPS Child Protection Booklet v6

The ISPS child protection policy works for the child, for the family, and for our community.

Board Policy 6.7.8 - Child Protection Policy: Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The ISPS Child Protection Policy works to respond at all three levels.

All schools hold a particular institutional role in society to protect children and to insure that they are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow, develop and learn. The abuse and neglect of children is a violation of children's human rights and an obstacle to their education and development. This Policy is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Children's Act 2012.

All ISPS employees and support staff have a professional, legal, 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 of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. All staff employed at ISPS, with reasonable cause to believe, must report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has/is suffering abuse or neglect.

Reporting and follow through of all suspected incidences shall proceed in accordance with administrative procedures and guidelines respective to this policy. The Director, after consulting with the Child Protection Team and the Board Chair, shall determine the next appropriate action, which could include reporting cases of suspected child abuse/abusers and neglect to the appropriate employment sponsor, to the respective embassy, and the child protection department of the local authorities.

Definitions, procedures, and guidelines for this policy are outlined in the Student Parent Handbooks, Faculty and Staff Handbooks, The "Child Protection Programme pamphlet", and the School's website. This policy and all definitions, procedures and guidelines will be reviewed annually by the school's Administration, the Child Protection Management Team, and the Board.

For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of Child see the following links:

<https://www.ttchildren.org/images/legislation/CHILDREN%20ACT%202012.pdf>

<https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do#protection>

[See section 31 of the Sexual Offences Act for mandatory reporting](#)

ISPS Child Protection Booklet, V6

Created by B Latham, March 21, 2019 - Borrowed from Lincoln Community School, Ghana

Reviewed by Child Protection Team, minor changes made on March 25th, 2019, further changes made May 15th, 2019 and May 22nd, 2019

Updated April 21, 2021

Location on server: The Director of ISPS – Complete School Operation Matters\Child Safety\ ISPS Child Protection Booklet v6 updated April 21, 2021



Child Protection Definitions and Procedures at ISPS

How are abuse and neglect defined?

Definitions of abuse are complex and based in various cultures of child-rearing behaviors, gender and 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 need of the more powerful person, for example a member of the family, a teacher, a coach or a friend. Broadly speaking, child abuse occurs when such persons, whether through action or inaction, cause injury, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child under 18 years of age in Trinidad and Tobago.

Physical Abuse is:

1. Inflicting non-accidental physical injury on a child, causing skin bruising, burns, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, death; and/or
2. Creating a substantial risk of physical harm to a child's bodily functioning; and/or
3. Committing acts that are cruel or inhumane regardless of observable injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, instances or extreme discipline demonstrating a disregard of a child's pain and/or mental suffering; and/or
4. Assaulting or criminally mistreating a child as defined by either the criminal code or school policy; and/or
5. Engaging in actions or omissions resulting in injury to, or creating a substantial risk to the physical or mental health or development of a child; and/or
6. Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any of the above.

Possible indicators of physical abuse:

1. Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body
2. Bruises of different ages (various colors)
3. Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electric cord, belt, buckle, ping pong paddle, hand)
4. Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation
5. Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back, or buttocks
6. Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron, or cigarette
7. Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso
8. Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child
9. Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line
10. Unexplained laceration, abrasions, or fractures



Neglect is failure, within a child's own environment, to provide the care, supervision, affection and support needed for his/her health, safety and well-being (childhealth.org/child-abuse). It includes:

Physical: Failure to provide necessary food or shelter or supervision e.g., failure to provide proper adult guardianship such as leaving children unsupervised at home for any extended period of time. **Note:** Should parents/ guardian leave the country for any reason the responsibility for informing the school of all appropriate contact details lies with the parent or guardian. Temporary *Change of Guardian Forms* are available from ISPS. These are expected to be completed prior to parents/guardians leaving the country; and/or

Medical: Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatments; and/or

Emotional: A pattern of actions, such as: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs, specific examples may include verbal humiliation, refusing to acknowledge presence of child, invasion of privacy for no specific reason, violent threats, etc.; and/or

Educational: Failure to provide access to opportunities for academic success (e.g., allowing a child to miss too much school, or keeping a child from needed special education services).

Possible indicators of neglect

1. Child is unwashed or hungry
2. Parents/guardians are uninterested in child's academic performance
3. Parents/guardians do not respond to repeated communications from the school
4. Child does not want to go home
5. Both parents or legal guardian are absent from Trinidad for any period of 24 hours or greater
6. Parents/guardians cannot be reached in the case of an emergency

Sexual abuse is committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in the criminal code of Trinidad and Tobago (Children's Act 2012), or intentionally touching either directly or through clothing, the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child for other than hygiene or child care purposes.

Sexual abuse has some different characteristics of child abuse that warrant special attention. While physical abuse is often the result of immediate stress and not usually planned, sexual abuse requires planning with results that are more insidious.

ISPS Child Protection Booklet, V6

Created by B Latham, March 21, 2019 - Borrowed from Lincoln Community School, Ghana

Reviewed by Child Protection Team, minor changes made on March 25th, 2019, further changes made May 15th, 2019 and May 22nd, 2019

Updated April 21, 2021

Location on server: The Director of ISPS – Complete School Operation Matters\Child Safety\ ISPS Child Protection Booklet v6 updated April 21, 2021



The planning, referred to as “grooming”, often results in victims accepting the blame, responsibility, guilt and shame for the sexual behavior of the offender. Sexual abuse requires far more secrecy than other forms of child abuse, so is more difficult to report. Many victims, through the process of grooming, are taught that the sex is a form of love, so tend to love their offender and often present as happy and well-adjusted children with no negative symptoms because of their perception of being loved.

Working with the sexual offender cannot be done by school counselors.

Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

1. Sexual knowledge, behavior or use of language not appropriate to age level
2. Unusual interpersonal relationship patterns
3. Sexually transmitted infections in a child of any age
4. Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anus areas
5. Difficulty in walking or sitting
6. Refusing to change into physical education (PE) clothes, fear of bathrooms
7. Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaints
8. Not wanting to be alone with an individual
9. Pregnancy, especially at a young age
10. Extremely protective parenting

What happens when a person has reasonable cause to believe?

These possible indicators of abuse and neglect (this page and the previous page) will be used by the staff member as a guideline for reporting to the counselor, who will determine if the case needs further attention. 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.

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.

When 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 their suspicions to the counselor, or to the principal. In all cases, the principal will be notified. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform the Director of the suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

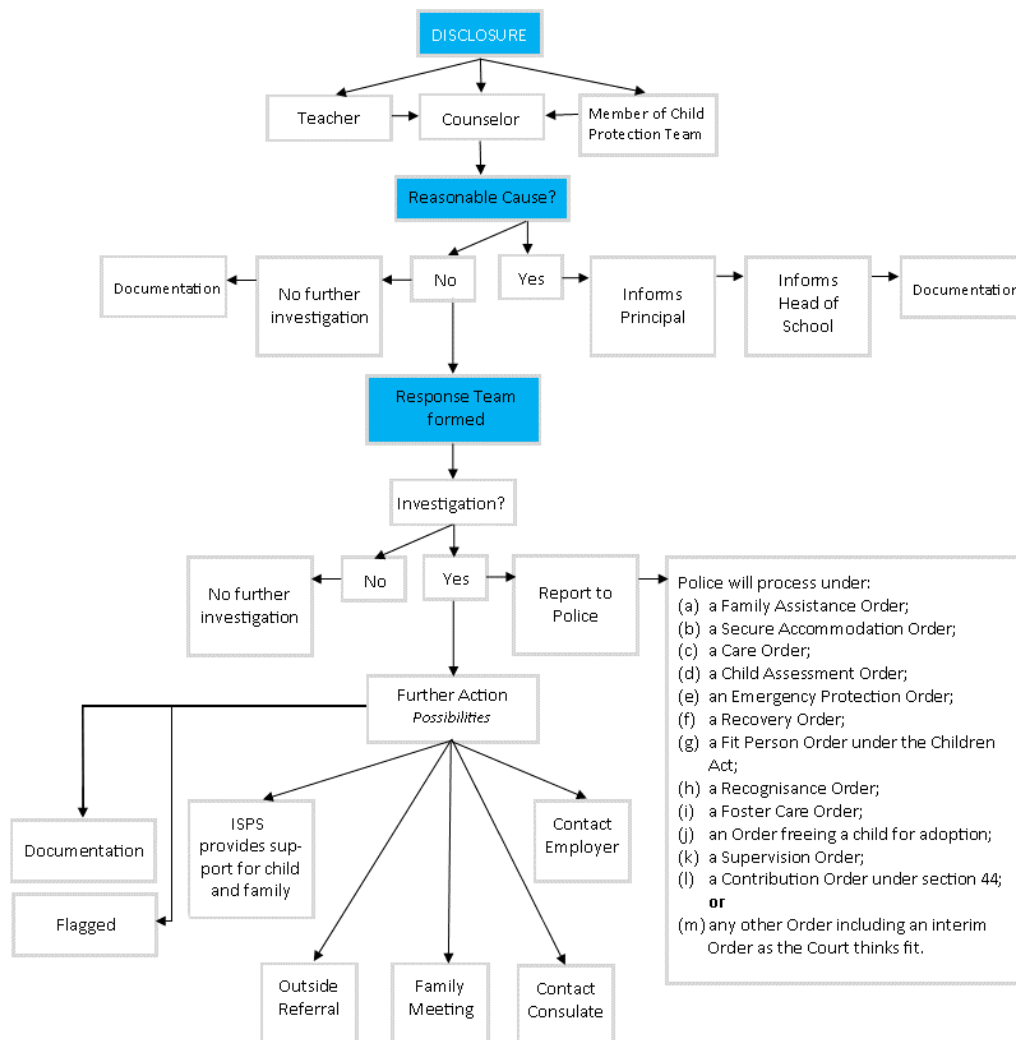


All staff, faculty and administrators must report incidences of abuse and neglect. All ISPS employees are also required to report suspicion of abuse or neglect. All reports of abuse and neglect must be made to the counselor within 48 hours for immediate response.

Procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse, neglect:

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 grade level counselor within 48 hours. The counselor will take initial steps to gather information regarding the reported incident and will form a school-based response team as needed to address the report. The response team will include the school nurse, counselor, and other individuals as the principal sees fit.





Step 2

Based on acquired information, a plan of action will be developed to assist the child and family. Actions that may take place are:

1. Discussions between the child and counselor in order to gain more information.
2. In-class observations of the child by the teacher, counselor, or administrator.
3. Meetings with the family to present the School's concerns.
4. Referral of the student and family to external professional counseling.
5. Notification of the management of the sponsoring employer of the concern with the child/family, or to the welfare office at the home-of-record.
6. Consultation with the consulate of the country of the involved family.
7. Consultation with the school or another attorney.
8. Informal consultation with local authorities.

In the event that the abuse or neglect allegation involves a staff or faculty member of ISPS, the divisional principal will follow board policy pursuant to ethical professional behavior.

Step 3:

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

1. The counselor will maintain contact with the child and family to provide support and guidance as appropriate.
2. The counselor will provide the child's teachers and the principal with ongoing support.
3. The counselor will provide resource materials and strategies for teacher use.
4. The counselor will maintain contact with outside therapists to update the progress of the child in school.

All documentation of the investigation will be kept in the child's school confidential records file. Records sent to schools to which their student may transfer will be flagged to let the receiving school know there is a confidential file for the child. ISPS will make every attempt to share this information to protect the child.

Most cases of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled by school counselors, such as those involving:

1. Student relationships with peers.
2. Parenting skills related to disciplining children at home
3. Student-parent relationships.
4. Mental health issues such as depression, low self-esteem, grieving.



Some cases will be referred to outside resources, for example:

1. Mental health issues such as depression, psychosis, dissociation, suicide ideation.

Cases reported for investigation and outside resources:

1. Severe and ongoing physical abuse or neglect.
2. Sexual abuse and incest.

In extreme cases when families do not stop the abuse or concerns remain about the safety of the child, reports could be made to:

1. The consulate.
2. The employer.
3. The Trinidad and Tobago Children's Authority
4. Child Protection Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS)



Emergency Numbers

The Children's Authority Hotline: 996 or 800-2014

Police: 999

Trinidad and Tobago Child Protection Unit: 629-0141

ChildLine: 131 or 800-4321 website: <https://childlinett.org/>

Child Guidance Clinic: 726-1324