

## Appendix F – Child Protection Policy

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### **Taipei American School Child Protection Policy (Last Updated August 2021)**

The School is committed to protecting the wellbeing of its students. This policy is intended to ensure that any employee who has information about any inappropriate or hurtful actions toward students reports it immediately. In addition, under Taiwanese law, all professionals responsible for the care of children, including all employees of the School, are required to report suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of eighteen (18).

Should a TAS employee become aware of a student at risk of maltreatment, or have a good faith suspicion that a student has suffered abuse or neglect, employees are required to report the concern to a supervisor, counselor, or divisional principal immediately. We reiterate that all you need is a good faith suspicion that a child is being maltreated due to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or the child is being neglected due to poor nutrition, shelter, or hygiene. Even so-called “boundary violations,” where it looks like a school employee is forming an inappropriate emotional attachment to a student, should be reported. You do not need proof of the suspected maltreatment in order to report and employees should never take it upon themselves to investigate their concerns. Employees are not penalized for reporting concerning behavior, even if it is not substantiated as abuse or neglect.

Following the chain of command, the divisional principal must be notified of concerns and report them immediately to the Head of School and to the Chief Operating Officer. The Head of School or her designee will review the situation and may consult with a physician or mental health consultant, legal counsel, and, if appropriate, the student's family, in determining necessary next steps to protect the student, including ensuring that the matter is reported to the competent government authorities, as required.

The privacy of the student and the student's family will be protected to the extent possible; however, when prioritizing student safety, faculty and staff are required to identify any and all information you have about the situation so that the School can take steps to promote the safety of the student involved and provide assistance to the relevant government agency and/or law enforcement agency who may investigate the report.

## Child Protection Procedure

All TAS employees have a professional and ethical obligation to communicate concerns about children who are in need of help and protection and to take appropriate action to ensure their wellbeing.

Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to children's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

### Definition of Terms

Definitions of abuse are complex and can differ across various cultures. TAS sets out common definitions of abuse and neglect as follows:

**Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or care giver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, hygiene or medical care where there is an ability to do so, or failure to provide supervision, resulting in threatened harm to the child's health, safety, and well-being.

**Emotional Abuse** is persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

**Sexual Abuse** is any sexual activity with or involving a child, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet or other electronic means).

**Boundary Violations** are where it looks like a school employee is forming an inappropriate emotional attachment to a student.

## **Risk Assessment and Mitigation**

1. TAS will conduct risk assessment for all appropriate events/activities involving children and for programs/projects that involve children and develop strategies to minimize risk.
2. TAS will employ safe recruiting practices to ensure the suitability of prospective employees to work with children.
  - a. Background checks must be conducted for all contracted TAS employees. Background checks will be part of the hiring process for new employees. Background checks will be re-administered every three years. In signing of the contract, the employees understand and acknowledge that violation of school policies is unacceptable at TAS and may result in termination for cause.
  - b. TAS will check evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases.

## **Education and Training**

1. TAS employees:

TAS will communicate this policy annually to staff and it is placed in the employee manuals. TAS will alert the employees to their responsibilities. Child abuse prevention and awareness training will be provided for all TAS employees annually prior to the first instructional day of each school year. HR will facilitate training for employees that are hired after the beginning of the school year on or as near to their first day of work.
2. TAS parents and students:

On the safeguarding page of the TAS website, students and families will be informed about TAS' commitment to child safeguarding and action steps if they have concerns about a child.
3. Partner organizations:

Organizations with continual relationships with TAS will be briefed on child protection and their responsibilities under the policy upon engagement with the organization.

## Reporting

The School has a legal obligation to follow the requirements of the ROC government as set out under the Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act and other laws and regulations in respect of the wellbeing of the children. The reporting procedures outlined in this section are designed to ensure all members of the school community are fully aware of their responsibilities. Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Employee Manuals (translations of ROC government websites) set out the reportable issues to the competent authorities.

All TAS employees must immediately report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect whenever there is a good faith suspicion that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. TAS employees who suspect child abuse must report it immediately to their supervisor, counselor, or divisional principal. Following the chain of command, the divisional principal must be notified of concerns and report them immediately to the Head of School and to the Chief Operating Officer.

1. If suspected abuse or neglect has occurred, the School will assess the need for immediate intervention (i.e. medical treatment) and develop a follow up plan. If medical attention is needed, the child will be taken immediately to the School Nurse. The School Nurse will document and photograph any visible injuries.
2. The divisional principal must report to the Head of School & Chief Operating Officer any suspected abuse or neglect either in or out of school. If the counselor or school psychologist were not involved in the original identification of the concern, the divisional principal will inform the grade level counselor to ensure social/emotional support and follow up to student as needed.
3. With the involvement of the Head of School, the Compliance and Regulatory Manager will report suspected incidents of abuse or neglect to the competent authorities, i.e. The Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, part of the Department of Social Affairs, Taipei City Government ("CPDVSA"), and The Campus Security Report Center, Ministry of Education. Reports should be filed within the time limit as provided under applicable laws and regulations. Depending on the CPDVSA's evaluation, the authority may proceed with an investigation and provide intervention for the reported cases of abuse and neglect.
4. The information required by the authorities will be submitted by the Compliance and Regulatory Manager. The Compliance and Regulatory Manager shall be the contact, should further information be required by the authorities.

5. When requested by CPDVSA the Compliance and Regulatory Manager coordinates with divisional counseling offices to arrange for a visit by a CPDVSA social worker.
6. The CPDVSA social worker may meet with a student on school premises without prior notification to the family.
7. Information related to the suspected abuse or neglect is strictly confidential and shall only be shared with those with a need to know within the school. Only the officers of the competent authorities will be given detailed information pertaining to cases on a need to know basis. Records must be kept and stored securely and confidentially. Information related to the suspected abuse or neglect shall not be disclosed to the public or made known to the public, advertised or disseminated by means of the media or any other kind of information technology in any manner whatsoever. Violation of confidentiality laws may result in legal liability.
8. In the case of an employee reported as an alleged offender, TAS will conduct a full investigation, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority.
9. The Compliance and Regulatory Manager will follow up with CPDVSA to get an update to determine if the situation is resolved or requires further assistance from the School.

### **Monitoring and Review**

1. This policy, and all procedures, guidelines, and programs developed under it, will be consistent with applicable laws and regulations of the ROC.
2. The policy & procedure will be reviewed annually by the TAS Leadership Team. The Board will be informed of the policy & procedure and further amendments.
3. The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Head of School, who will report on the effectiveness of the implementation to the Board.